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DOCTRINAL DISCOURSES

For the Sundays and the Chief Festivals of the Year

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IN FOUR VOLUMES

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By

REV. A. M. SKELLY, O. P.

WITHDRAWN

FIRST VOLUME

From the First Sunday in Advent to Quinquagesima Sunday, Inclusive

Published at
Aquinas Academy,
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WASHINGTON

Nihil obstat.

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Fr. J. R. Newell, O. P., S. T. L., Pr. Gen.

Imprimi potest.

Fr. A. L. MacMahon, O. P., S. T. M.,
Prior Provincialis.

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Die 20a Febr., 1917.

COMMENDATION.

Bishop's Residence,
740 View Street, Box 667.

Victoria, B. C., February 28, 1918.

Dear Father Skelly: Having seen the advance sheets of your "Doctrinal Discourses," I bear willing testimony to their great merit. Sound in learning, copious and varied in material, easy and flowing in style, your sermons are well adapted to instruct, to edify, and to please.

I augur for them a wide circulation.

✣Alex. MacDonald,
Bishop of Victoria.

FOREWORD

In presenting these volumes to the public the writer cannot put forth the plea, as has been often done, that he is supplying a long-felt want. On the contrary, the shelves of most priests' libraries are filled with sermon books, whether native to the language or translations.

Neither, while elaborating those discourses was he consciously preparing matter for publication. They grew in numbers and volume in the course of a somewhat lengthy pastoral and missionary career.

Lastly, he lays no claim to originality. In the course of his readings he picked out what he thought was worth repeating from the pages of old preachers and authors. Many of those sermons are in good part adaptations from the French and Italian. The great body of them have already appeared in Catholic Weeklies whether here or in Ireland. And it is in response to a wish expressed by many readers that they might be put in permanent form that they are now adapted to the Sundays of the year.

As will be noticed, many of these pieces were originally woven into long missionary sermons. Here, for the advantage of his brother priests who may desire to make use of the matter contained in them, they are cut

up into twenty-minute discourses. This may give them an unfinished appearance, which the kind reader is asked to treat indulgently.

Moreover, for conciseness' sake and to obtain greater purity of diction the matter is put in a somewhat condensed form. The preacher will speak with more telling effect by using his own illustrations and by employing local color according to the character of his hearers.

At the suggestion of an esteemed and experienced friend a short synopsis of the matter and structure is given before each separate piece.

The writer takes this opportunity to express his gratitude to his kind friend, the Right Rev. Alexander MacDonald, D.D., Bishop of Victoria, B. C., for his great kindness in looking over the matter before publication.

With this short explanation, he commits the first volume of his work to the providence of God and to the indulgent consideration of the public, with the hope that it will not be without fruit of instruction and edification. Should it not prove a financial failure, he may be encouraged to publish the remaining volumes during the course of the year.

An-t-athair Aindreas M. Ua Scolaidhe.

5041 Ninth Avenue N. E.,

Blessed Sacrament Church, Seattle, Washington, U. S. A.,
Easter Sunday, 1918.

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DOCTRINAL DISCOURSES

For the Sundays and the Chief Festivals of the Year

INTRODUCTORY CONFERENCE.

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRUE RELIGION.

FIRST PART.

1. Definition of religion by St. Augustine (De Vera Relig., c. 55). Religion may be said to have, in our relations towards God, a place somewhat analogous to that which piety has in our relations towards our parents.

2. In the earlier days or periods of creation the Creator prepared the world for human habitation. "The earth was in the beginning aeriform and shapeless." Under God's creative hand this gaseous body cooled down to the condition of dry land and sea. Afterwards it evolved life; first, vegetable; then piscine and bird life; then animal, that people earth and sea. When all was now prepared God took counsel with Himself, and, as a result, He decreed, "Let Us make man to our own image and likeness."

3. Man made up of body and soul. His soul is spiritual, rational, possessing intelligence and free will; capable, therefore, of knowing and loving its Creator. This soul is naturally immortal. Its end considered as a natural being would be TO KNOW GOD INDIRECTLY THROUGH HIS WORKS, AND TO LOVE HIM WITH A PURELY NATURAL LOVE—*and this knowledge and this love should make its happiness for eternity.*

4. But God's goodness impelled Him to ordain man for the possession of Himself by supernatural knowledge and love, to be attained through the "light of glory".

To enable him to attain to this supernatural end, man's nature must, first of all, be lifted into the supernatural. This, God did by infusing into his soul the divine quality of sanctifying grace This gives him an existence superior to his nature. It is made,

moreover, the bond of friendship between him and God; and is his title-deeds to eternal glory.

At the same time God lifted the powers of man's soul, his mind and will, to the supernatural by means of the infused habits. These are the theological and moral virtues, and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost—habits capable of producing supernatural acts, and therefore, meriting a supernatural reward.

5. God's beneficence to man stopped not till He endowed even his mortal body with immortality, which He willed to do through means of the virtues of the tree of life.

Thus endowed, the Almighty placed our first parents in a delicious garden called Paradise, to cultivate it, and to enjoy the fruits thereof. Furthermore, to enhance our glory He willed that man should attain his eternal end as a reward of service. To this effect He gave him an easy precept to fulfil. And it was His intention that after a mild probation man should pass to his eternal end without passing through the gates of death.

We must clearly understand that neither his ordination to a supernatural end, nor his gifted state as it regarded soul or body was due to man. He might, therefore, be deprived of them without injustice, and even without cause; much more so, if he were found unfaithful, had abused his free will, and committed sin.

Being thus created a reasonable being, man was responsible for his acts, and as he was capable of reward on account of his virtuous acts; so he was liable to punishment for his misdeeds.

1. In order that I may speak with clearness, let me, first of all, describe for you what I mean by religion. Religion is defined by St. Augustine to be "the true and legitimate worship of the true God; the true manner of serving Him, in order to render ourselves worthy of Him, and to attain to a union with Him. It is by it that we attach and bind, so to speak, our souls to God Himself to find in him alone our repose and happiness." (De Vera Relig., c. 55.)

Religion may be said to have in our relations towards God a place somewhat analogous to that which piety has in our relations towards our parents. Our parents give us being, exercise a providence over us, rear and educate us. God is our Creator, our Ruler, our Provider,

our Redeemer, and our last End. We owe love, respect, obedience, and all the other duties that are contained in these terms to our parents. We owe to God as the Supreme Being, and as our Creator, our Provider, our Redeemer, and our Last End, adoration, praise, thanksgiving, love, and service, in return. The sum of those duties, together with belief in His revealed truth, worship, hope, obedience, we call, in general, religion. I go now to give an outline of God's dealings with us from the beginning.

2. In the opening words of the Bible we read that God created heaven and earth. You are all more or less familiar with the history of that creation. In its earlier days or periods,—for, I need not here delay to consider lengthily the words of *Genesis*,—the Creator prepared the world for habitation; and, in fact, furnished it with ornaments and inhabitants.

We can fancy this planet of ours evolving an independent individuality as distinct from the rest of the cosmic matter, together with which it was originally formed; and, first, as a vast fiery mass of cloud. "The earth," says *Genesis*, "was in the beginning aeriform and shapeless." This aeriform or gaseous body, in the course of ages, cooled down, first to a liquid, and afterwards to the condition of dry land and sea that we are acquainted with.

Under the creative hand of God it by degrees evolved life; first, vegetable; then piscine and bird life; then animal, that people earth and sea. "God also said: 'Let the waters bring forth the creeping creature having life, and the fowl, that they may fly over the earth under the firmament of heaven.' . . And again God said: 'Let the earth bring forth the living creature in its kind, cattle,

and creeping things, and beasts of the earth, according to their kinds,' and it was so done."

And now we come to the work at the close of the sixth day.

When all was now prepared, God paused in the work of creation, and entered into council with Himself. As the result of that august council of the Blessed Trinity, God decreed: "Let us make man to our own image and likeness," "And," says Scripture, "He formed man out of the slime of the earth, and He breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul."

3. Let us consider this last and most perfect of terrestrial beings.

From the words of *Genesis* he is made up of body and soul. His body is in no way essentially different from those of the animals previously formed by God. But as to his soul, it is different from anything that God had yet made to appear on the earth. All else that we are acquainted with are material, even the souls of living things. But the soul of man; it is spiritual; rational; possessing intelligence and free will; capable, therefore, of knowing and loving its Creator.

Behold the foundation of all religion in man; his capability of knowing and loving, and possessing his Creator.

Consider man natural and supernatural as he comes forth from the hand of God. He is gifted with a spiritual soul; a soul, therefore, naturally immortal; since spirit, being a simple substance, cannot be destroyed, except by the omnipotent act of annihilation. The soul is, therefore, destined by nature to live for ever. It is rational, and gifted with free will, capable of knowing and loving its Creator.

The soul's end, considered as a natural being, is *to*

know God indirectly through His works, and to love Him with a purely natural love; and this knowledge, and this love, should make its happiness forever.

4. But God's goodness induced Him to do more for man. He ordained him for a supernatural end—the beatific vision or, the possession of Himself by supernatural knowledge and love, to be attained through means of the "light of glory". In order to the attainment of this supernatural end man's nature and man's powers must be raised to the supernatural order; for there must be proportion between the end, and the nature, and the means. What then does God do for man?

To enable him to attain the supernatural end for which He ordained him, viz. an intimate and personal union with Himself for all eternity, He first of all lifted his nature to the supernatural. And this He did by infusing into his soul sanctifying grace.

Now sanctifying grace is a divine quality infused into the soul which becomes its supernatural form or life. This gives him an existence superior to his nature; and this sanctifying grace is made, moreover, the bond of friendship between him and God, and his title-deeds to eternal glory.

At the same time that He endowed his soul with sanctifying grace, which adheres, as I have said, to its substance and is made its supernatural life, he lifted also the powers of his soul, the mind and will, to the supernatural by means of the infused habits. These are the theological and moral virtues, together with the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost: virtues and gifts which strengthen his powers and enable them to produce acts which merit a supernatural reward. Thus endowed with his nature and his powers lifted to the supernatural, man was capable of attaining his supernatural end.

5. But even this did not satisfy the loving beneficence of our God. He would even go farther and endow His body with immortality, a gift superior to his nature, through means of the virtues of the tree of life.

Thus endowed, the Almighty placed our first parents in a delicious garden called Paradise, to cultivate it, and to enjoy the fruits thereof.

Furthermore, to enhance our glory He willed that man should attain his eternal end as a reward of service. To this effect He gave him an easy commandment to fulfil; viz., to abstain from eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which stood in the midst of Paradise. And it was his intention that after a mild probation man should pass to his eternal end without passing through the gates of death.

We must clearly understand that neither his ordination to a supernatural end, nor his gifted state, as it regarded soul and body, was due to man. He might, therefore, be deprived of the one and the other without injustice, and even without cause; much more so, if he were found unfaithful; had abused his freewill; and commited sin.

Being thus created a reasonable being, man was responsible for his acts. And as he was capable of reward on account of his virtuous acts; so was he liable to punishment for his misdeeds.

INTRODUCTORY CONFERENCE.

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRUE RELIGION.

SECOND PART.

1. Introduction. Recapitulation of the chief points of the preamble.

2. "Man in the beginning was created upright." In this condition God tried his fidelity by the prohibition to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Our first parents wilfully broke that precept and were guilty of a shameful mortal sin. As a consequence, they lost the chief prerogatives of their state of innocence, i. e., they lost original justice together with all the supernatural qualities that accompanied it. As a further consequence they were deprived of immortality. And, lastly, a frightful disorder began to rage in their interior. But not Adam and Eve alone, but we also, their descendants, were made to share in the penalty of their sin.

3. This brings us face to face with the fundamental mystery of our religion, original sin.

That we are guilty of original sin is of faith. "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and by sin, death; so, death passeth upon all men, IN WHOM ALL HAVE SINNED." *(Rom. v., 12, etc.)*

What is original sin? It is a state of disfavor in which we come into the world consisting in this, that we are conceived and born devoid of the supernatural life of our souls, or sanctifying grace. Moreover, as a result of original sin, our nature lost its original uprightness. You ask, How came we to be guilty? I answer with Sts. Anselm and Thomas, that the explanation is to be sought in the solidarity of the human race as represented in Adam, its moral head. "By the disobedience of one man, many," i. e., all, "have been made sinners."

4. We now come to the chief and all-important point elucidating the origin and state of religion as known in the world after the Fall, viz., the sentence of the tempter. "I will put enmities between thee and the woman," etc. Who is this woman, and who is her seed? Evidently none other than the Blessed Virgin and her Son, Jesus Christ. The Almighty, ever mindful of His mercy, even in the moment of their fall, promised the guilty heads of our race a Redeemer, who should spring from them through a woman born of their race; and, hence, sprung the religion of mankind. They believed in the Redeemer to come; they hoped in the Redemption to be wrought by Him;

they strove to observe the precepts of the natural law. They prayed to God and offered sacrifice to Him in testimony of His supreme dominion, in thanksgiving for His benefits, in atonement for their sins, and to beg His help in their need.

5. As the ages pass, the Almighty fills in the features of the Redeemer; chastens the crudity of primeval worship, and multiplies divine revelation to men. The true religion, which in the beginning was adapted to the patriarchial state of society, assumed a national character when the Jews, its depositories, grew into a nation. At last in the fulness of time, God sent His angel to the Woman whose Seed was to crush the serpent's head, Mary, the Virgin of Nazareth. At his word, and by the operation of the Holy Ghost, she conceived and brought forth the Man-God, Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world.

1. In the first part of this conference we gave a short preamble or introduction to the subject. In it we, first of all, with St. Augustine, defined religion to be the true and legitimate worship of the true God, and showed that it may be said to have in our relations towards God a place somewhat analogous to that which piety has in our relations towards our parents.

We then went on to show how the Creator, after having prepared the world for human habitation, "made man to His own image and likeness," and endowed him with the faculties of mind and free will.

Moreover, the Creator out of His own goodness and liberality ordained man to the supernatural end of beatitude, or the possession of Himself for all eternity. As a necessary consectary to this ordination came the elevation of man's soul by grace to the supernatural order, and the concomitant elevation of his spiritual faculties, by means of the infused habits; and, lastly, to crown His gifts, He endowed his mortal body with immortality through means of the virtues of the tree of life.

Furthermore, to enhance our glory He willed that man should attain his end as a reward of service. To this effect He gave him an easy precept to fulfil. And it was His intention that after a mild probation he should pass

to his eternal end without passing through the gates of death.

So much as a preliminary to the subject of this conference, which is to give you an outline of the state of the true religion in the world down to the coming of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer.

2. You are all acquainted with man's condition of dignity and honor in the beginning. "He was created upright," that is to say, there was a perfect subordination of his inferior faculties and powers to his superior ones; even as they in turn were perfectly submissive to the will of God.

You are also more or less familiar with the circumstance of man's trial and fall. God gave our first parents the easy commandment, to abstain from eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Eve, seduced by the devil, in disobedience to that commandment, plucked of the fruit of the tree and did eat, and gave to her husband, Adam, who likewise did eat. In this they were both guilty of a shameful mortal sin of disobedience and infidelity to their Benefactor. By their sin they broke the bond of friendship that united them to God. As a consequence, they were deprived of the chief prerogatives of the state in which they had been created, i. e., they lost original justice, or sanctifying grace, which is, as I have said, the supernatural form of the soul, together with many supernatural qualities that accompanied it. As a further consequence they were deprived of the immortality with which God in the beginning had endowed them.

And, lastly, a frightful disorder began to rage in their interior. Their superior powers having refused obedience to the Creator, their senses and passions rose in revolt against them, and from that instant they felt what St. Paul had afterwards so much to complaint of,

"a law in their members contradicting the law of their minds." As a sign of this concupiscence which began to rage in their hearts, we see the first man and woman go and hide themselves from God and screen themselves with fig leaves to cover their shame, which, while in the state of innocence, they felt no reason for.

But it was not Adam and Eve alone that were to feel the evil results consequent on the first fall. We also are made to share in the penalty of those who were the chiefs of our stock, as we should have shared in their privileges had they proved themselves faithful.

3. This brings us face to face with the great fundamental mystery of our religion—original sin, which henceforth begins to infect our race, and which shall cover all humanity, save and except, through God's special providence, one chosen soul.

What then is original sin, and how came we to be guilty of it? That we are guilty of it is of faith, and is clearly laid down by St. Paul (Rom. v., 12, etc.): "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death: so death passeth upon all men *in whom all have sinned.*"

Without here descanting on the errors of the Pelagians in the fifth century or those of Luther in the sixteenth, let me say that original sin is a state of disfavor in which we come into the world consisting in this that we are conceived and born devoid of the supernatural life of our souls, or sanctifying grace.

You will remember I said when treating of God's gifts to Adam that he was in the beginning created physically and morally upright. His body was subject neither to disease nor death. His will was in all things subject to the Eternal will. His inferior powers gave a willing allegiance to his superior powers. His body obeyed his

soul. Moreover, God lifted him to the supernatural. Sanctifying grave pervaded his soul. His spiritual powers were marvelously strengthened through means of the infused habits—the theological and moral virtues, together with the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. Together with them he possessed a marvellous assemblage of gifts and favors.

These gifts and favors were not due to him as a right belonging to his nature, but were the pure result of the divine bounty. The Almighty could without injustice deprive him and his of them should he prove unfaithful. Well, this is precisely what occurred. Adam, besides his personal liability for sin procured for us, his offspring, the deprival of all supernatural gifts and privileges. We were created in the order of mere nature.

Moreover, as a result of original sin our nature lost its primitive uprightness. Our minds were darkened, our wills were weakened and lost dominative control over our inferior powers. Concupiscence began to assert itself in our lower nature, our senses to ever seek their proper satisfactions irrespective of the claims of the moral law. Such do we find ourselves as children of fallen parents; and such, in great part, the condition of our first parents themselves after their fall.

You ask, How come we to be guilty?

On this point St. Thomas after St. Anselm gives the true doctrine when he argues from the solidarity of the human race as represented in its head. For, just as the head of a society or corporation, acting as such, brings credit or dishonor on all the members of that society, and all are held worthy of reward or punishment as a consequence of his acts, though they themselves contributed not by positive volition in his actions; and just as the crime of a parent brands his yet unborn chil-

dren with shame, and entails on them a share of his own responsibility, even so can the inspired St. Paul truly say, "by the disobedience of one man many, i. e., all, have been made sinners;" and thus we all have become sharers in his disfavor with God.

4. I need not dwell on the circumstances of our first parents' trial by God or their sentence of lifelong penance for their sins.

Let me come to the chief and all-important point, elucidating the origin and state of religion as known in this world after the fall, viz.: the sentence on the tempter.

When God was about to sentence our first parents He addressed them individually and said to them, Why did you do this? thus giving them an opportunity to plead.

Coming to the tempter, this interrogatory was laid aside, and calling the devil before Him He said: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel."

"I will put enmities between thee and the woman." Who is this woman who is to be set at enmities with the devil by God Himself, and whose seed is to be set at enmities with the devil's seed, and who is to crush his audacious head with her triumphant heel?

Not Eve surely? She was a weakling who was easily made his slave and confederate in enmity with God Himself. Moreover, we know that the greater part of the seed, i. e., the offspring of Eve, were sinners: so much so that God was often obliged to wreak dire punishment on them for their sins.

The great Woman referred to by the Almighty was one to appear in the depth of ages yet to come, who was to reverse the curse brought upon the world by Eve, and to repair the evil of the first fall, through means of

Her Son, the Redeemer of mankind. That Woman, I need scarcely tell you, is none other than our glorious Mother, the Virgin Mother of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

This sentence, then, constituted the only hope of the guilty pair. They had violated the commandment of God. They had created a wall of separation between themselves and their Creator. They had wrecked the princely patrimony of their race. They had deserved everlasting punishment for their crime.

But the Almighty, ever mindful of His mercy, in the moment even of their fall, promised them a Redeemer to spring from their race Who should reverse the evil of the first fall, and take dire vengeance on the tempter.

In these words, then, we see the first revelation of God promising a Redeemer to man after his fall; and hence sprung the primeval religion of mankind.

The traditional knowledge of the first fall and the belief and hope in a Redeemer to come; behold the primeval religion of mankind! They believed in the Redeemer to come; they hoped in the Redemption to be wrought by Him: and they strove to observe the precepts of the natural law. They prayed to God and offered sacrifice to Him in testimony of His supreme dominion, and in thanksgiving of His benefits, in acknowledgment of the punishment due to their sins, and to obtain help in their needs.

5. As the ages pass along the Almighty fills in the features of the Redeemer Whose outline He but sketched in the beginning, chastens the crudity of the primeval worship, and multiplies divine revelation to mankind.

The first renewal of the primeval promise was made many thousands of years afterwards, when God promised Abraham that he should be the father of a great nation, and that in his Seed "all the nations of the earth should be blessed." The promise was again renewed to

his son Isaac, and to his grandson Jacob. And the latter foretold on his bed of death that the Messias should be of the line of his fourth son, Juda.

The true religion which from the beginning had been a patriarchial religion, i. e., transferred by tradition from father to son, and of which the patriarch or head of the family was the recognized high-priest and head, received an immense development at the hand of Moses on the delivery of the Jewish people from the bondage of Egypt.

Thence it became a national religion; a religion adapted to a people who had passed from the patriarchial state into that of a nation. It took on the form of a religion with a system of elaborate ritual, and ceremonial laws, and solemn sacrifices, such as we venerate it and as it was practised by the Jews during the fifteen hundred years of their history. In those centuries the great body of the revealed word contained in the Old Testament was written. The Messias was promised to come from the line of David, the King. The prophets foretold with admirable precision all the chief characteristics of the Redeemer to come: the age in which He should appear, the place of His birth, the manner of His life and of His death, the character of the Redemption He should accomplish at the cost of His life and Blood, and the great blessings His coming should bring upon mankind.

At last, in the fulness of time, the Almighty began to fulfil the promise made from the beginning of the world. He sent His angel to the Woman whose Seed was to crush the serpent's head, Mary, the Virgin of Nazareth. At his word and by the operation of the Holy Ghost she conceived and brought forth the Man-God, Jesus Christ, Who by His doctrine and example became the Teacher of mankind, and by His death upon the Cross, the Redeemer of the world.

FIRST PART

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

FIRST SERMON: THE GENERAL JUDGMENT—THE PRELIMINARIES.

"And then they shall see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty."—Luke, xxi., 27.

1. Frequency of the references to this great truth, first, in the sacred liturgy, in the pages of the Old and the New Testaments, second, in the writings of the Fathers, and Doctors, and Preachers of the Church.

2. The reason—the frequent meditation on this great truth withdraws us from the commission of sin, and impels us in the practice of virtue—practical examples.

3. The Mount of Olives a most appropriate spot on which to meditate on this salutary truth for us, as well as for the disciples of our Lord.

4. Analytical description of the signs and events that shall take place before the General Judgment as foretold in the Sacred Books—their appalling effects on the unhappy damned.

5. The dread summons—"the great day of wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

1. You heard announced on last Sunday from the Gospel of St. Matthew the signs that shall take place before the last great General Judgment. And today again the Church in her liturgy puts before us the consideration of the same great terrible truth. And, indeed, I may remark that to one who is accustomed to read the sacred Scriptures this truth of the General Judgment turns up again and again in the pages of both the Old and the New Testaments. The prophets were accustomed to put it, often under various figures, often in plain language, before the minds of the Jewish people. Our blessed Lord

speaks of it more than once in the Gospel. The sacred writers of the New Testament call up frequently the terrors of that great "Day of the Lord". Nay, the Fathers, and Doctors, and Preachers of the Church have at all times spoken and written of the great doctrine of the General Judgment, and have not wearied in sounding it in the ears of the faithful. What is the reason, dearly beloved, that one perceives at all times in the Church of God this spirit that impels her to think and speak often of this dread truth?

2. It is none other than that we may have always before us the salutary saying of the Wise Man: "In all thy ways remember thy last end and thou shalt never sin." The frequent meditation on the terrors of the General Judgment—the end of man—has that in it whereby we are drawn from the commission of sin and impelled to the practice of virtue. It was the thought of the account that must be rendered before the judgment seat of God that made so many holy souls leave the world and spend their lives in penance and prayer. It was the same thought that gave the martyrs courage to submit to the false judgments of their persecutors, and to yield up their lives joyfully in the midst of torments. It was this all-absorbing thought that made St. Jerome, even after he had tamed by his virtue the fierce beasts of the forest, still practise those incredible austerities which have made him the type of a penitential life. For, almost naked in his cave of Bethlehem, and striking his bared breast with a stone, he tells us that he used to start in terror from his sleep as he fancied he heard the great archangel proclaim in tones of thunder: "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment!"

Thoughts like these were they that took possession of the disciples when, as the beginning of the chapter of this

day's Gospel tells us, they sat at our Lord's feet and questioned Him, saying: "Master, when shall these things be, and when shall they begin to come to pass?"

3. We gather from the different evangelists that our Lord sat on the Mount of Olives with His disciples, and that His face was towards the temple of Jerusalem. O chosen spot on which to meditate on this awful and salutary truth!

Before Him lay the city of Jerusalem with its high walls, and strong towers, and double line of fortifications; with its splendid domes and palaces, the pride of every Israelite; but which, before forty years, by the inexorable judgment of God, should be leveled to the dust, so that to this day the exact site of the ancient city can scarcely be found. We are told that He looked towards the temple—that superb edifice, beauteous in all the glory of its recent restoration, which had that very day called forth the admiration of the disciples; but of which our Lord in reply foretold: "Amen, I say to you, there shall not be left of it a stone upon a stone." Beyond the city a little to the right stood the hill of Calvary, that hill upon which He Himself, the Man-God, was within three days to die the bleeding Victim for sin. A few miles to the rear the bitter waters of the Dead Sea rolled over the cities of the plain—a perpetual memorial of God's anger and fierce judgment upon sinners. Under the walls of Jerusalem lay the Valley of Hennom, the "Valley of Slaughter," as it was called, whose very name to the Jews was that used to signify the infernal pit in which sinners shall everlastingly burn; while out before Him stretched the ample Valley of Josaphat, the very spot in the mind of the Jews, in which the General Judgment of all mankind was to take place and the tre-

mendous sentence of eternal bliss or eternal woe pronounced.

Let us, also, my brethren, ascend the Mount of Olives. Let us gaze in spirit on the prospect around us and beneath us as we meditate with the disciples on the words of Jesus Christ, as He expounded to them the mysteries of that great day.

4. "There shall be signs," He says, "in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars." It is in those heavenly bodies, therefore, that the first warning shall be given of the cataclysm that is to follow. St. John tells us that "the sun on that day will become black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon as blood, and the stars from heaven fall upon the earth, as the fig tree casteth its green figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind." "Darkness shall cover the earth as with a garment," more horrible than that which of old covered the land of Egypt, when "no man saw his neighbor, or moved out of the place in which he was." "And on the earth distress of nations by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves!"

We are told that the earth will be consumed by fire. Streams of flame shall shoot out over the whole earth, roaring and destroying as the ocean when it lashes its waves in fury against the rocks and hurls the stoutest ship like a toy beneath its waters. The mountains shall fume and tremble as did Sinai on the day that God descended upon it to proclaim the law to the Jews; while overhead shall lightning flash, with claps of thunder more terrific than those which paralyzed with fear the assembled Jews, when they besought Moses that the "Lord would no longer speak to them lest they die." "And on the earth distress of nations by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves!" Terrified

at those portential signs, the Scriptures say that "men shall wither away in fear and expectation of what shall come to pass upon the whole world."

The prophet Sophonias thus denounces the terrors of that great day: "The great day of the Lord is near; it is near, and exceeding swift. The voice of the day of the Lord is bitter. The mighty shall there meet with tribulation. That day is a day of wrath, a day of tribulation and distress, a day of calamity and misery, a day of darkness and obscurity, a day of clouds and whirlwinds, a day of trumpet and alarm." "And the kings of the earth," says another prophet, "and the princes, and the tribunes, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman, and every freeman, shall hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and they shall say, to the rocks and the mountains, 'Fall upon us and hide us from the wrath of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?'"

5. But hark! What sound is that which rises above the din and crash of the crumbling world? Oh, God! It is the voice of the great archangel who blows his trumpet "on the shore of the sea which is the earth," and calls with a voice of thunder: "Arise! ye dead, and come to Judgment!" St. John in his prophetic book of the Apocalypse tells us some of the circumstances that shall accompany that dread summons. "And I saw," says he, "a mighty angel coming down from heaven clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was on his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet like pillars of brass; and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the land, and he cried with a loud voice as when a lion roareth; and he lifted his hand to heaven, and he swore by Him, that liveth forever and ever, Who cre-

ated the heavens and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are therein, that time shall be no more."

Oh, sublime and awful moment! time shall be no more. Yes, time shall be no more—the time of pleasure shall be no more; the time of offending God with impunity shall be no more; the time of drunkenness and riotousness shall be no more; the time of injustice and debauchery shall be no more; Oh, mercy, the time of mercy shall be no more!

Who are those myriads of dark forms that hover with reluctant soar over the mouth of yonder infernal smoking abyss? Who are those horrid shrieking beings that fly about in wild confusion? Oh, horror! They are the damned spirits, men and devils, aroused by that trumpet note which rang from end to end of hell summoning the reprobate: "Time shall be no more! Arise, ye damned, and come to Judgment!"

Oh, who can think of that dread summons and sin? Ask the damned who are now about to appear before the Eternal Judge, were they allowed to come to earth again and live, would they dare to offend their Lord and God? Ask that drunkard, would he again extinguish in himself the light of reason by self-indulgence? Ask that angry soul that appears to have been devouring himself in hell, would he again, were he allowed to live on earth, quarrel with his neighbor whom God commanded him to love, even as himself? Ask that unjust dealer who when on earth pilfered the goods of his neighbor, would he again, were the opportunity given him, deal unjustly by him? Ask that impure wretch who when on earth wallowed in the flesh, whose every thought was sin, whose every desire was foulness unutterable, whose very words scattered abroad

stench as the dunghill, whose every act was unclean as ill became a beast, were he again allowed time of repentance, would he walk in the paths of iniquity, now that he realizes that he is about to appear before a Judge with Whom even idle words shall receive their meed of justice, and before Whom the very just shall scarcely feel secure?

Oh, dreadful thought of Judgment! "Mighty men," that is, the proud, "shall there meet with tribulation." "Men shall wither away in fear and expectation of what shall come to pass upon the whole world." "And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the tribunes, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman, and every freeman, shall hide themselves in the dens and the rocks of the mountains, and they shall say to the rocks and the mountains: 'fall upon us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?'"

SECOND SERMON: THE GENERAL JUDGMENT THE ENACTMENT.

"And I saw a great white throne and One sitting upon it from Whose face the earth and heaven fled away, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing in the presence of the throne. And the books were opened; and another book was opened which is the Book of Life; and the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books according to their works."—Apoc. xx., 11-12.

1. As this day will be one of wrath for the wicked; so, it will be one of consolation and reward for the elect.

2. The coming of the Judge in power and majesty.

3. The Judgment, how searching and terrible! Appeal.

4. The sentence—inexorable, on the wicked; sweet and consoling, on the elect.

5. Practical resolutions.

1. There are no thoughts more profitable than those that circle round the tremendous truth of the General Judgment of mankind. And those thoughts are especially seasonable in these closing days of the year when everything reminds us of our mortality.

Moreover, this season of preparation for the mystical coming of Christ at Christmas reminds us of the preparation we must make for the great second coming of the Saviour when as Sovereign Master of the universe He shall come to judge the living and the dead. That judgment opens with the dread summons of the great archangel in the manner I have described for you—a summons which throws the reprobate into paroxysms of fear.

But thanks be to God, it will not be altogether a day of wrath and condemnation. No, for Jesus Christ has said: "When these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads; for, your Redemption is at hand." Why is it, my brethren, that those words of consolation are introduced into this discourse which up to this has sounded but of terror and alarm? It is to intimate that as this day will be one of wrath for the unjust, so, it will be one of consolation and reward for the elect. In the beginning of the discourse Christ told His disciples that they would have to suffer many things in this world for His Name's sake. He foretold to them many persecutions from the world—that they would be delivered up to the synagogues, and cast into prisons—that they would be dragged before temporal judges to give testimony of their fidelity to Him—and that even their own relatives would betray them, and that they would be objects of hatred to the lovers of the world, because of their adherence to virtue and religion—and now He comforts them by the assurance of their future reward.

Oh, what shall be the consolation of the just when Christ Himself will reward them for their sufferings in His service! In this world indeed the just meet with many tribulations. But the judgment seat of God will be for them only a tribunal of acquittal and reward.

Then will the rags of poverty worn with resignation and humility, shine more gloriously than the bejeweled vesture of kings. Then will the rebuffs of a frowning world borne with Christian fortitude, bring joy beyond that tasted by those who lived in ease and indulgence. The sorrows of the afflicted will be turned into joy, and the patience of the servants of Christ will be rewarded with a crown of incorruptible glory. In this world sinners are everywhere mingled with the just; but then, "God shall send His angels with a trumpet and a great voice, and they shall gather the elect from the four winds and from the furthermost part of the heavens, to the uttermost bounds of them." "And the just shall be caught up into the clouds to meet Christ, into the air." "Look up," O ye meek and humble. "Lift up your heads," O ye sorrowful and persecuted; "for, your Redemption is at hand."

2. "And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty." Heaven and earth shall flee before Him, as He appears in the majesty of the Man-God coming to judge the living and the dead. "And I saw," says St. John in his vision of the General Judgment, "a great white throne and One sitting upon it from Whose face earth and heaven fled away, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing in the presence of the throne. And the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by the things that were writ-

ten in the books according to their works." O Christian man, consider what it is to stand before the face of a God all-seeing, just, and terrible! "And I saw the dead great and small standing in the presence of the throne."

3. "And the books were opened." Yes, for now there is more than one accountant. The devil will be there with his book of the life and actions of every man, from Adam down to the last child that will have been born—of the faults committed -of the temptations consented to—of the sins of the eyes, and of the ears, and of the tongue, and of the taste, and of the touch; yes, and of the unuttered thoughts of man's crooked heart. The book of the all-seeing God will be opened, which will give testimony to every idle word that man shall have spoken. Aye, and a third book will be opened, and one perhaps more astonishingly severe than either of the other two; and that will be the book of man's own conscience. That interior tribunal that God gave to every man will then issue its record of the acts of man's life. Sins that were forgotten for years shall be presented before the soul in the sight of men and angels with a clearness that will astonish it—sins committed in secret —sins that we were ashamed to speak of before men—sins concealed from the confessor in the sacred tribunal of penance—sins which the very conscience itself shrank from looking at, are now presented to its reluctant gaze—are now exhibited to the whole world.

O Christian soul steeped in mortal sin, if there be one here, if there be a man in this church today who has heard this Gospel read and whose conscience is stained with mortal sin,- enter into yourself, ask yourself these questions. How long shall I be the enemy of God? How long shall my defiled conscience give testimony of my guilt? How long shall I imperil my soul

by exposing it to the danger of eternal damnation? Let not this evening's sun go down the witness of your guilt. Leave not this church today without making your peace with God, if not by confession, at least, by a sincere sorrow for your sins, with the firm resolution of confession as soon as may be.

4. And then, my brethren, the sentence! You all know it. Those few words from St. Matthew cannot but appear awesome to the mind of even the most thoughtless child, as he recites them from his catechism. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into eternal fire!" Oh, what shall be the despair of the damned when they shall hear that awful sentence from Jesus Christ, their Judge! What shall be the anguish that will wring their terror-stricken souls at the pronouncement of their awful doom! "Depart from Me," from Me Who would have pressed you to My bosom as My dearest children—from Me Who have shed the last drop of My Heart's Blood to redeem you from the power of satan. Begone forever from Me Who have created you for the enjoyment of My presence for all eternity. "Ye cursed," cursed by your companions in guilt as the cause of their greater torture! Cursed by My angels and saints as the offenders of the Divine Majesty; cursed by your own selves as the cause of your own ruin, and as the reprobates who dared to raise your rebellious heads against the Most High; cursed by Me, your Lord, your God, your Creator, your merciful Redeemer, and now your implacable Judge. Get ye gone into everlasting fire kindled by the breath of My anger, not for you, but for satan and his rebellious angels! "*There* shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." . . .

Far different will be the sentence which the Eternal Judge will pronounce upon the elect. To the reprobate,

indeed, He will exhibit Himself as the inexorable Judge at the breath of Whose anger "heaven and earth shall flee away in fear." But to the just He will show Himself the tenderest of Fathers inviting His children to the everlasting banquet of His love.

"Come ye blessed of My Father," of My Eternal Father Who has adopted you as His children by the adoption wherewith I adopted you when I deigned to assume your nature. "Possess the kingdom which was prepared for you," that blessed country where "you will be inebriated with the plenty of God's house, and drink of the torrent of His pleasures." Come from the dwelling place of guilt, and tears, and sorrow, to the abode of rest and peace. Come to share in the kingdom of your heavenly Father, and to reign with Him forever; "Ye blessed of my Father," Who "has loved you with an everlasting love;" "Ye" in whom He sees children redeemed by My Blood and co-heirs with Me in the kingdom of His glory. Ye meek and humble, "look up." Ye sorrowful and afflicted "lift up your heads," for, the full blossoming of "your Redemption is at hand." My own beloved ones that have suffered with Me, enter into the land "where I shall wipe away all tears from your eyes" and "death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more; for the former things have passed away."

5. This, dearly beloved, is the substance of the words I have read for you from this day's Gospel. There is no word of addition to it from beginning to end. Every sentence that is spoken in this passage of scripture is confirmed, and strengthened, and put in more striking form, in other parts of the divine writings. Is it not awful from beginning to end? And was it not with

reason that St. Jerome used to start from his sleep at the thought of judgment?

Should not we also put on the fear of God? And if he, a saint worn to death with austerity, so feared for himself, at the thought of judgment, shall not we, sinners, tremble? Oh, "it is an awful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!" "My brethren," says St. Augustine, "I would exhort you to banish all fear if I myself felt secure; but I tremble at the thought of hell."

What then shall we do to escape from that awful doom? Let us, my dear brethren, take the precautions counselled us by our blessed Lord in this very discourse. "Take heed that no man seduce you." "He that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved." "Be ye always ready; for at what hour you know not, the Son of Man will come." "Blessed is that servant whom when his Master cometh He shall find watching." "Take ye heed, watch, and pray; for, you know not when the time is."

THIRD SERMON: THE COMMANDMENTS THEIR NATURE.

1. Introduction—on the serious consideration, and on the proper solution of the question put to our Lord by the young man spoken of in the Gospel depend issues of eternal import to us all. Still more worthy of our lifelong consideration, the reply of our Saviour. Such a knowledge of the Commandments as we can conveniently arrive at, obliging on us as the natural consectary of the necessity of their observance by us—Our purpose, to give a series of practical instructions on their chief headings.

2. The Commandments in their essence, nothing more or less than the precepts of the natural law; hence, the solemn and important duty of their observance by us. In their present form, they are the solemn precepts promulgated by God on Mount Sinai and afterwards adopted by Jesus Christ as the basis of the Christian law. This promulgation made necessary by reason of the depraved condition into which the human race had fallen as

a consequence of sin—the whole procedure, therefore, an astonishing act of God's mercy.

3. Graphic description of the event given from the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of Exodus. The solemn promulgation.

4. Effects on the terrified people—alternative fate allotted to man for their observance or non-observance.

5. Conclusion—conviction brought home to us, first, that we must observe them, and, second, that we must acquire an exact knowledge of their nature and of the extent of their claims on us, which is the first requirement and the primary condition of their perfect observance.

1. Once when our Blessed Lord was preaching, a young man came before Him, and, with a look of concern as of one possessed by some great thought, put to Him this all-important question: "Master, what must I do to possess eternal life?"

There was a great deal in that question of supreme importance to that young man. There is a great deal in it of supreme importance to us all, as on its proper solution, and on the action we take consequent on that solution, depend issues of eternal import.

But no less important, nay, still more worthy of our life-long consideration, the reply of our Saviour. For, as the Gospel tells us, Jesus, looking on him with benignity, for He loved him, replied: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments."

Now, since we learn from this answer of our Lord that the keeping of the Commandments is the one great condition of our salvation, it follows, first of all, that we should try to acquire such a knowledge of them as we can conveniently arrive at, so as to be able to satisfy their claims upon us with intelligence and perfection.

That you may arrive at such a knowledge, we have determined to give a series of practical instructions on their chief headings during the coming weeks.

2. And, now, the first question it strikes one to ask when brought to reflect on this subject is: What are the Commandments?

Well, dearly beloved, the Commandments, if we consider them in their essence, are nothing more or less than the precepts of the natural law which were given us at our creation. They are the precepts of the natural law; that is to say, of that law impressed on our souls by God to be the proximate and rational rule of our conduct during life, and which is itself nothing else than the expression of the eternal law, or the most holy will of God commanding the natural order to be fulfilled, and forbidding its ordinances to be disturbed. This law was stamped on our hearts at our creation, and it is intimated to us by the very light of reason and by the instinct of our rational nature.

From this we learn how solemn and important the duty of fulfilling this holy code, since its source lies deep in the infinitely holy nature of God Himself.

If we consider the Commandments in their present form, they are the solemn precepts promulgated, long ago, by God from Mount Sinai to the children of Israel. These precepts were afterwards adopted by Jesus Christ and promulgated anew as the basis of the Christian law, to be observed by all who aspire to eternal life with God. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments."

The former promulgation was made necessary by reason of the depraved condition into which the human race had fallen consequent upon the sin of our first parents. For, as a result of that great catastrophe, and of the disorder introduced into his nature by sin, the mind of man became so clouded as to perceive only obscurely or not at all, his most vital obligations, to the fulfilment of which was attached his eternal welfare.

The Almighty seeing this, and being a daily witness of the miserable condition into which the whole human race had fallen, took pity on us, and determined to express in words the precepts of the natural law, which were already written in our hearts.

3. He therefore called up Moses to Him to the summit of Mount Sinai, and from out a cloud, and in the midst of the most awful solemnities, Himself dictated the law of the Commandments.

The Book of Exodus, that Book of the Old Testament that relates the history of the Jews during their forty years' sojourn in the desert, gives a graphic description of that great event. It tells us that on the fiftieth day after the Israelites had departed from the land of Egypt, the Lord commanded Moses to summon the people in their tribes and families, and to arrange them around the foot of the mountain.

CHAPTER XIX.

"And now," say the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of this Book, "the third day was come, and the morning appeared, and behold, thunders began to be heard, and lightning to flash, and a very thick cloud to cover the mount; and the noise of the trumpet sounded exceeding loud; and the people that was in the camp feared.

"And when Moses had brought them forth to meet God from the place of the camp, they stood at the bottom of the mount.

"And all Mount Sinai was on a smoke: because the Lord was come down upon it in fire, and the smoke arose from it as out of a furnace: and all the mount was terrible.

"And the sound of the trumpet grew by degrees louder

and louder, and was drawn out to a great length. Moses spoke and God answered him.

"And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, in the very top of the mount, and He called Moses unto the top thereof.

CHAPTER XX.

"And the Lord spoke all these words:

"I am the Lord, thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

"Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.

"Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth.

"Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them: I am the Lord, thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me,

"And showing mercy unto thousands to them that love Me and keep My Commandments.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that shall take the name of the Lord his God in vain.

"Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

"Six days shalt thou labour and shalt do all thy works,

"But on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, thy God; thou shalt do no work on it, thou, nor thy son, nor they daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger that is within thy gates:

"For, in six days the Lord made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them, and rested on

the seventh day: therefore, the Lord blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it.

"Honour thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee.

"Thou shalt not kill.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery.

"Thou shalt not steal.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house; neither shalt thou desire his wife, nor his servant, nor his handmaid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his."

4. "And all the people saw the voices, and the flames, and the sound of trumpet, and the mount smoking; and being terrified and struck with fear they stood far off.

"Saying to Moses: 'Speak thou to us and we will hear; let not the Lord speak to us, lest we die.'"

Such, dearly beloved, is the law of the Commandments, a law which is to be the rule of our lives; and to the fulfilment of which God has attached the momentous affair of our eternal welfare. He that shall observe them, shall, according to the saying of our Lord, enter into eternal life. He that shall observe them not, shall be condemned.

5. Let the conviction of this awful truth sink deep into our hearts and fill us with earnest solicitude for their fulfilment.

And God grant that this solicitude may urge us to a true zeal in acquiring an exact knowledge of their nature and of the extent of their claims upon us, which is the first requirement, and the primary condition of their perfect observance.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

FIRST SERMON: ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST—THE SAINT AND PROPHET.

"And when they went their way, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: 'What went ye out into the desert to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went you out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold they that are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of the kings. But what went ye out to see? A prophet? Yea, I tell you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: "Behold I send my angel before Thy face who shall prepare Thy way before Thee."'"—Matt. xi., 7-10.

1. The Eulogy of the Baptist, an introduction to the study of the life and doctrine of our Lord.

2. The greatest saint is he, first, whom God has called to the highest sanctity, and, second, who has corresponded to that vocation by the most perfect fidelity—sublimity of John's vocation—his perfect correspondence with grace.

3. The saint lives at one and the same time a life, first, of the most perfect innocence, and, second, of the most austere penitence—his conduct a shining example to us of prudence.

4. Manner of life of St. John in the desert.

5. The new prophet—the preacher of penance.

6. The spiritual director—he gives counsel, first, to the people; second, to the Sadducees; third, to the soldiers; fourth, to the publicans.

1. As an introduction to the study of the life and doctrine of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, which the Gospels of the Sundays of the year, beginning with Christmas, put before us, the Church devotes the Gospels of those Sundays, the second, and third, and fourth, of Advent, to the eulogy and preaching of that extraordinary man whom Providence designed to be His holy precursor. I shall be in keeping, therefore, with the spirit of the sacred liturgy in considering the career of this man, whose

virtues our blessed Lord praises in such unmeasured terms.

2. But what language can adequately describe the grandeur of the life of one who has no other historian than the evangelists, no other panegyrist than Jesus Christ —of one "than whom," we have it from the mouth of Truth itself, "greater hath not arisen of those that are born of women"? That I may convey to you some notion of that greatness, let me at the outset lay down for you this incontrovertible principle—that true sanctity is at one and the same time the work of God and the work of man. It is the work of God, Who produces it by His grace; it is the work of man, who achieves it by his fidelity. The greatest saint therefore is he whom God has called to the highest sanctity, and who has corresponded to that vocation by the most perfect fidelity.

Now, what vocation could be higher than that of St. John the Baptist? and, at the same time, what fidelity greater than his? His vocation was most sublime. All the wonders that have respect to his birth and angelic life proclaim this. Ages beforehand prophets announce his destiny; when the fulness of time is come an archangel foretells his birth; miracles accompany that birth; his sanctification precedes it. Now are not all those wonders so many proofs of an extraordinary vocation? His was without doubt the vocation of a man called by God to a rare and singular sanctity, a sanctity which cannot perhaps be surpassed by any of the children of men. "A greater hath not arisen."

3. But how will John correspond to a vocation so remarkable? This the Gospel makes known to us.

But let me first of all tell you that there are two sorts of holiness—that of the saints who lived in innocence, and that of the saints who lived in penitence. Now,

John the Baptist unites in himself these two kinds of holiness, by living at one and the same time in the most perfect innocence and in the most austere penitence. He strove during his whole life to preserve his innocence, that precious and delicate flower which the breath of grace gives birth to, and which the breath of sin instantly destroys. In order to preserve it he quit the world from his tenderest childhood and took refuge in the desert. Secluded caves, sombre retreats, vast solitudes, which were in former times the sojourn of the prophets; these will be the asylum of his innocence, of his virtue; these will be the sole confidants of the secrets of his heart; the sole witnesses of those ardent prayers that he addresses to heaven for the conversion of the unfaithful Jews, for the glory of the Messias, and the reformation of the world. Before echoing to the loud sound of his preaching, the desert will be made familiar with the lifelong accents of his broken sighs and groans.

Ah, my friends, what an example for us in this conduct of St. John! We behold this strong man of Israel seek safety for his virtue in flight from the allurements of the world; and we, alas, born with a weakness only too well known to us by experience, we dare to brave unarmed the temptations of the world, and we fear not to go forward to meet the enemy, who has only to show himself in order to overcome us.

4. But what is the life of St. John in the desert? That life is presented to us by the evangelist in perhaps the sublimest sketch that was ever penned: "And the same John had his garment of camels' hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat was locusts and wild honey." (Matt. iii., 4.) Thus are we introduced to the manner of life of the Baptist in the desert. Water bubbling from the rock will be his drink; vile insects,

and honey found by chance in the hollows of trees; these will be his nourishment; a coarse garment platted from the cast-off camels' hair, a pale and disfigured countenance; all announce the severity of his penitence; the austerity of his life. But if his exterior is disfigured by austerity, how does not sanctity adorn him within? He unites at one and the same time the merit of innocence and the merit of penitence. These are the two qualities which Jesus Christ commends in the Gospel. "What," he asks the Jews who had gone to hear John preach, "what went ye out into the desert to see? Is it a reed shaken with the wind? Is it a man of unsteady and fugitive virtue which sways to the blast of every passion; or is it a man with virtue firm and unbending as the giant palms that canopy the Jordan, towering heavenward? What went ye out into the desert to see? Is it a man clothed in soft garments such as are to be seen in the houses of kings? or is it one wrapped in garb of most austere penitence? What went ye out into the desert to see? Is it a prophet? Aye, more than a prophet! For the prophets had wives and children, houses and lands; but here is one whose manner of life is more angelic than human; more than a prophet by reason of the excellence of his office; for the prophet's function was to announce the coming of the Messias from afar; his, to point his finger to the Man-God and say: 'There He is.'"

5. What influence draws that mighty throng of eager men into the barren desert? What tumult disturbs places so long consecrated to solitude and repose? The cities are deserted; the wilderness is peopled as the streets of the crowded city. A new prophet appears and draws to him all Judea. It is the Precursor. It is the accomplished model of preachers, John the Baptist. Ah, "John

was himself a burning and shining lamp"! The fire of zeal is in his heart; the light of grace is in his words; he comes in the spirit and the power of Elias. He possesses all the eloquence and firmness of that prince among the prophets; he knows the world without having any experience of it, because one knows enough of vice when he has in his heart the principle of virtue.

What a divine influence pervades all his acts! He persuades by his example; he terrifies by his threats; he enlightens by his instructions; he edifies by his humility.

"Do penance," he says. His appearance and his actions say the same before him. "Enter on the ways of justice"; and his conduct shows them the way. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." His whole life has been devoted to the smoothing the royal path of grace into the city of His soul.

Terror marches before him. He knows that fear is a bridle that restrains the heart of man—a spur that urges him on. He is not content therefore with exhorting sinners to penance. He thunders; he frightens. This "burning and shining lamp" which illuminates and warms little ones, becomes for hardened sinners a lightning that terrifies. Observing, therefore, on the outskirts of the ardent throng of penitents who hung upon his words, some cynical priests and Pharisees, drawn hither by malice and curiosity, his ardor kindles. "Offspring of vipers," he addresses them, "what brings you here? Who hath taught you to flee from the wrath to come?" Ungrateful serpents, whom the Lord has nourished in His bosom, do you, like your forefathers, dare to raise your heads against Him, even as the progeny of vipers that lacerate the womb that bore them? Tremble for your salvation; the thunder of the Lord mutters; the lightning

from heaven is ready to destroy you. "Sterile and unfruitful trees, the axe of divine vengeance is ready to strike you. If you bring not forth fruits worthy of penance, you shall be cut down and cast into the fire. The heavenly husbandman is on his barn floor. His winnowing fan is in His hand. He goes to sift His corn; the good wheat He shall store up in the granary of His church; but the chaff, it shall be cast into the flames."

6. "What shall we do then?" say the people, terrified at his words. "What shall we do?"—words befitting true penitents who are touched at the knowledge of their sins, and which indicate a condition of soul ready for the reception of grace—"What shall we do?" It is then that the Baptist enlightens them by his instructions. But will the direction of a man so austere and mortified be more terrible and more terrifying than his threats? No, my friends, his direction is wise, exact, and practicable. It is wise; because it holds a mean between severity and leniency. It is exact; because it is the Spirit of Truth that he consults. It is practicable; because it is proportioned to the state of those who consult him.

The rich Sadducees consult him. Will he say to them: "Quit your goods; renounce your families; and come with me to weep over your sins in the depths of the desert." No, he merely says: "Give alms, and give it from your superfluity." "Let him who hath two tunics give to him who hath none." He does not say: "Let him who has only one give it away"; that is a counsel of perfection given by Jesus Christ to His elect ones. But, "let him who has two give away one": that is a precept.

The soldiers come to consult him. Will he command those men of blood to renounce at once the works of

war and think only of sanctifying themselves in the silence of peace? No; he knows that war becomes only too often a necessity. He therefore tells them simply to avoid the disorders of their profession without renouncing it.

The publicans—those who farmed the taxes—come to consult him. Will he say to them: "Men abhorred by the whole world; vile slaves of avarice, quit a profession which makes you hateful to the whole human race, and come to sanctify yourselves with me in poverty"? No, he simply says: "Forget not the poor; spare the widow and the orphan; spare the blood and tears of the unhappy; and collect the taxes without fraud."

Let us, my brethren, attend to the wise direction of the prophet. Let us give heed to his instruction and exhortation. Let us imitate in holiness of life him who pleads with us more powerfully by his example than by his words.

SECOND SERMON: THE COMMANDMENTS ANALYSIS OF: THEIR SCOPE AND AIM.

1. The aim of the Commandments is to regulate our lives in accordance with the eternal law of God and the dictates of our rational nature: i. e., to intimate to us the duties we owe to God and to our neighbor.

2. The Commandments originally written on two tables of stone. The first table contained those that had reference solely to our relations with God—significance of the injunction "remember," prefixed to the third Commandment.

3. The Almighty proclaims His prerogatives in order to compel obedience. By those Commandments the whole man in his thoughts, words, and actions is subjected to the divine worship.

4. On the second table were inscribed the other seven Commandments which prescribe our duties to our neighbor. Of our neighbors, some, as our relatives, etc., have special claims on our regard—others, only common or general claims.

By a particular ordination of God, first, the claims of those special ones are set down immediately after those that have reference to God Himself, and, second, among the Commandments, this one (the fourth) alone promises a reward even in this life, in return for its faithful observance.

5. The following three Commandments safeguard the rights of the neighbor, first, in his person; second, in his honor; third, in his property—they dispose us towards him in our acts; the eighth, in our words; the ninth and tenth, in our thoughts and desires.

6. The end of the Commandments is the glory of God, and our well-being in this world and the next.

7. Conclusion—the beatitude promised by the psalmist to him "whose will is to do the law of the Lord, and on His law he shall meditate day and night."

1. In my introductory discourse on the Commandments I tried, in the first place, to make you sensible of the importance of knowing them well; in the second, to give you an idea of their nature, and of the causes which led to their promulgation by God on Mount Sinai. Let me confine myself in this instruction to setting forth a brief analysis of them.

And, first, their scope or aim is to regulate our lives in accordance with the eternal will of God and the dictates of our rational nature; in other words, their aim is to intimate to us the duties we owe to God and to our neighbor. This is readily seen if we consider them in detail as they were promulgated by God on Mount Sinai, and as they are given in the books of the Old Testament.

2. When Moses came down from the Mount after forty days' converse with God, he carried with him the Commandments inscribed on two tables of stone. The first of these tables contained the first three Commandments, those that had reference solely to our relations with God. By them we are commanded to reject all false divinities, such as were worshipped by

the Gentile peoples, and to adhere to the one, true God, and to adore and serve and love Him alone. "Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them."

In the second, we are commanded to have due reverence for His most holy Name. And in the third, to set apart a portion of the time given us in life for His special worship, and to the exclusion of all worldly concerns.

And here let me direct your attention to the little word "remember" prefixed to the Commandment. This, as the others, was no new precept on the part of God. From the beginning He exacted this service from mankind, of the sanctification of the seventh day in memory of His own great Sabbath, or the resting from His works; and this we learn as well from the records of pagan nations as from the early Jewish traditions.

But it was characteristic of human nature then, as it is unhappily today, to ignore the great ordination; and, hence, the injunction "remember." "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord, thy God. Thou shalt do no work on it, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. For, in six days the Lord made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them, and rested on the

seventh day; therefore, the Lord blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it."

3. These three Commandments prescribe to us our duties towards our Creator, Who, in order to their fulfilment by us, proclaims His prerogatives of our Lord, our God, our Benefactor, our Judge and eternal Rewarder. And, as we see, they subject our powers interior and exterior totally to His worship and service. In fact, the whole man may be said to be included in his thoughts, and words, and acts; since man may be described as a creature who thinks, and speaks, and acts. And, so, I say, these three Commandments subject us totally to the worship and service of God. The first regulates the thoughts and emotions of our hearts in perpetual fealty to Him; the second, our words; and the third, our actions which must be at all times in complete subjection to His will but on certain appointed days are to be wholly consecrated to His service and worship.

The decree is gone forth, dearly beloved. God has commanded. It is our duty to obey. Let it be our constant endeavor therefore so to regulate our thoughts, and words, and acts, that they may be ever employed in the service of our God Who has so many titles to our service, worship, and esteem.

4. On the second table of stone were inscribed the other Commandments which prescribe our duties towards our neighbor.

Now as to our neighbor, there are some who have special claims on our regard by reason of their more than ordinary relations with us; and there are others who have only common or general claims; and both these claims must be satisfied with charity and justice to all.

Those who have special claims on us and those also

in varying degrees are our parents, our children, our relatives, our superiors and inferiors; and those claims are looked after in the fourth commandment. And it is worthy of remark, first, that by the particular ordination of God the claims of those special ones are set down immediately after the Commandments that have respect to God Himself. "Honor thy father and thy mother," and the direction embodied in the Commandment in regard to our parents is the exemplar of the conduct we must employ towards all those with whom we hold ties of special relationship; and, secondly, that among all the Commandments this one alone promises a reward even in this life in return for its faithful observance: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived in the land which the Lord, thy God, shall give thee." It would seem that the Almighty desires to offer a special inducement for the faithful observance of this Commandment of respect for parents, who are His representatives on earth in regard to their children.

So much for the first four Commandments. The last six have regard to our neighbor in common; and, as we shall see, they are most comprehensive in the prescribing of our duties towards him.

5. The fifth commands us to respect the rights of our neighbor in his person, which is under the divine protection, and to abstain from all unjust aggression on his life, and physical and spiritual well-being. "Thou shalt not kill."

The sixth safeguards the honor of the neighbor in his family, and is designed to preserve the dignity and sanctity of social life from assaults of unrestrained license and sensualty: "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

The seventh teaches respect for the rights of our fellow men pertaining to goods of fortune; those goods given them by God to minister to their necessity or comfort here below: "Thou shalt not steal."

So much as to our acts in reference to our fellow men. And here let me remark that the Commandments, being given to recall to our minds the precepts of the natural law already graven on our hearts and intimated to us by the light of natural reason, give only the chief headings, and that underlying those short precepts there exists the most comprehensive import, an import which subjects the whole man to their jurisdiction. This we shall see more clearly from the consideration of those that follow.

In the eighth we are commanded to speak of our neighbor, of his doings and personality with justice, truth, and charity, and to abstain from all that would injure him or unjustly lessen him in the esteem of his neighbors, or tend to deprive him of his reputation or character: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

And here let me remark again that it is not necessary that what you say of your neighbor be a falsehood in order to offend against this commandment. What you say may be as true as that the sun is in the heavens, but that gives you no right to publish it. To make known to others, for instance, the secret faults of your neighbor, is like stealing the goods of a spendthrift. That a man squanders his goods in foolish excesses is his own affair, and gives no passer-by the right to rob him; and, so, the secret, or quasi-secret faults of the neighbor are his special affair for which he will have to account before God, and no right is given to any unauthorized persons to make them subject for public gossip; and the person

guilty of such conduct unjustly deprives that neighbor of his reputation, and is held before God as a robber of that neighbor's good name before his fellows.

But it is not alone that the Commandments regulate our exterior acts and words in regard to our fellow men. This they do in common with the laws of civil governments, which, as far as they are laws worthy of the submission of their subjects, are but applications of it and are founded on it. That which shows the superiority of God's government of us and His sovereign dominion over our whole being, is that He prescribes laws for the regulation of our inmost thoughts and wishes. And, hence, in the ninth and tenth Commandments we are forbidden to think of, or desire those things that we are forbidden in other Commandments to transact externally: "Thou shalt not covet," etc.

Such, dearly beloved, is the scope and aim of the Commandments; and we must admit, as I have already remarked, that they are most comprehensive and take under their jurisdiction the whole life of man, both as to his exterior and interior actions. It was only God Whose wisdom is infinite and Whose dominion is supreme, that could thus subject a creature like man to so universal and salutary a law.

6. And now, dearly beloved, the end. It is the glory of God and our well-being in this world and in the next. It is the glory of God; for God is glorified in the fulfilment of His own eternal decrees, and in the carrying out of that beautiful order He contemplated in the world at its first creation. It is our well-being here, and this is guaranteed to us by the exact fulfilment of those religious and social duties where, on the one hand, the yearnings of our souls are satisfied by intercourse with our God, our Creator, and our Last End; and, on the other, the

rights of each one are safeguarded. And it is our well-being in the world to come. At the same time, that the virtuous fulfilment of our duties to God and man disposes the soul to righteousness within herself and imparts to her an ineffable peace and satisfaction, it merits an eternal reward and prepares for a happy eternity hereafter.

7. O dearly beloved, may you look on the Commandments in this light; you will find in them the charter of your liberty, the ground work of your happiness. Love them, practise them, make them the rule of your conduct during life. And to this effect, "meditate upon them," as says the Lord to us in the book of Deuteronomy, "sitting in your house; walking on the way; at lying down, and rising." Thus will you satisfy God's claims upon you during life, and you will earn for yourselves the beatitude promised by the psalmist, "Blessed is the man whose will is to do the law of the Lord, and who meditates on that law day and night; he shall be like a tree that is planted near the running waters," like that majestic growth which the prophet contemplated as rearing itself in the glory of foliage and flower, and which "brings forth its fruit in due season;" you will put forth here the foliage of holy thoughts and aspirations, and the flowers of good works; and you will bring forth the fruit of merit, to be garnered in the eternal hereafter, in the paradise of God.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

FIRST SERMON: ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST—THE FRIEND OF THE BRIDEGROOM: THE PRINCE OF MARTYRS.

"The Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites to him to ask him: 'Who art thou?' and he confessed and did not deny: and he confessed: 'I am not the Christ'," etc.—John i., 19-20.

1. Introduction. Last Sunday's discourse devoted to the consideration of the Precursor's life in the desert, to his preaching and holy direction. Today's sermon devoted to the consideration of the shining example of his humility and his holy death.

2. "The voice of one crying in the wilderness." He declares himself unworthy to loose the latchet of the Saviour's shoes. "He must increase, but I must decrease." "The friend of the Bridegroom."

Religion's hero. "Non licet." He is put in chains. "Art Thou He that art to come, or look we for another?"

3. Herod's birthday feast. Salome's dancing pleases the king. "Give me here in a dish the head of John the Baptist."

4. Fruits of his life: first, his virtues—"a burning and shining lamp"; second, his preaching—a continual call to a life of penance; third, his death—a stimulus to heroism and zeal—appeal.

1. I said in my discourse of last Sunday that the Church devoted the Gospels of the second and third and fourth Sundays of Advent to the eulogy and preaching of the holy Precursor of the Messias, St. John the Baptist. We occupied ourselves then with the consideration of the Precursor's life in the desert, to his preaching and holy direction. In accordance with the Gospel of today we go on to consider the shining example of his humility, and his holy death.

Such power displayed in the preaching of our saint, joined to such an example of innocence and austerity of life subject to John all hearts. Crowds press around him

to receive from him the baptism of penance which is the symbol of conversion of heart. Unheard of success accompanies his labors. He is taken for Elias. He is taken for one of the ancient prophets re-arisen. What shall I say? He is taken for the Christ—for the long expected Messias. Will he allow himself to be dazzled by the splendor of his glory? No, my friends; it will only give him a favorable opportunity to edify all by his humility. This virtue you know does not easily accommodate itself to success. Vanity lays hold of all things that glitter, and even the Saints are not free from its assaults.

John the Baptist is humble in his success. When, therefore, many begin to look upon him as the Messias, he suffers them not to regard him even as a prophet. He would even make himself less than man. He says of himself in answer to their inquiries: "I am the voice"—vain thing—"the voice of one crying in the desert."

The Saviour comes to receive baptism at his hands. He humbles Himself. John would think himself happy to receive from Him what He demands. He declares himself "unworthy to loose the latchet of His shoes." He knows that Jesus will efface his glory, and he announces Him. He is the first to point Him out and say: "There He is. . . . Behold the Lamb of God Who cometh to take away the sins of the world. He must increase, but in proportion as His reputation grows, mine must become less. He is the Bridegroom of the Church." "My chief glory is to be the friend of the Bridegroom." "Therefore, do I rejoice with exceeding joy, because of the presence of the Bridegroom Whose voice falls mellow on my ears."

What humility in one so exalted! Ah, John was truly humble, because he saw truth with clearness. Let

us learn from him to esteem the gifts of God at their proper value and not attribute to ourselves what belongs to Him alone.

2. A man so powerful in word and work could have no other end than one capable of adding a new lustre to his virtue. After having been an example to all men in the practice of virtue, and the model of preachers by the splendor of his doctrine, John the Baptist will become the prince of martyrs by the heroism of his death.

The world regards as a hero the man who braves death that he may take from other men their liberty or their life, and that he may procure for himself the triumph of ambition. But religion, more enlightened in her views and more just in her judgments, regards as a hero him who sacrifices his liberty and who suffers death to make truth and justice triumph. There is merit in knowing how to discern the truth; there is often courage in saying it; but it is only a hero that charges himself with the duty of carrying it to the ears of kings. It enters the palace only in fear and trembling. Its voice is there but little known; its figure strange.

Will truth then never enter the palace of the Herods? Yes it will. It enters with John the Baptist. It does more; it speaks, it storms in the ears of Herod himself.

John has now within the space of one short year moved all Judea. Crowds from every corner of the country from Galilee to Palestine throng the banks of the Jordan to hear the word from him and receive the baptism of penance. The great council of Jerusalem send deputies to consult him and ask him if he were in truth the Messias. Herod sends messengers to invite him to his palace and to have him preach before him. The king listens to him. He consents even to follow his counsels

in everything that is indifferent to him—that cost his inclinations nothing.

This commencement of favors will not last. The saint finds out that Herod keeps scandalous commerce with his brother's wife. He cannot keep silence. His zeal is kindled. He is no longer the voice of one crying in the desert. He comes to cry in the midst of the court. He thunders in the ear of the king the bold and troublesome word: "Non licet." "It is not permitted; it is not permitted," he says, "to hold scandalous relations with another man's wife."

The courtiers blame him. Herod is enraged with him. Herodias detests him. He is put in chains. What a spectacle! John in prison; Herod on a throne! Innocence oppressed; vice triumphant! It is the will of God Who ever perfects the virtue of His servants by giving them a trait of resemblance to the Crucified Whose life they strive to copy.

John is tranquil in his misfortunes. He suffers for truth, and truth consoles him. Herod may take from him his liberty, but it is not in his power to weaken his courage, or to tarnish his virtue. They "go down with him into the pit, and in bonds they leave him not." His zeal for his Divine Master forsakes him not in prison. Some of his disciples are allowed to see him. He sends them to Jesus to ask him: "Art Thou He that art to come, or look we for another?" Was it that the Baptist was in doubt concerning the Person of Jesus Christ? No, but he would have those disciples who were prejudiced against the Saviour see His works, that thus they might be drawn after Him. And it was on this occasion that our Blessed Lord pronounced that magnificent eulogy on the Baptist which is unique in the Gospels, and

where He exalts him above the prophets and the most renowned that the earth had seen.

3. The illustrious defender of truth lies in prison; but God prepares for him a trial still more terrible. He has passed a part of his life in the Apostolate of Jesus Christ; He must end that life by martyrdom.

Herod famous for the pageantry of his court, gives on his birthday to all his courtiers a sumptuous banquet. At this banquet Herodias could not fail to be the ornament. She causes her daughter Salomé to execute in the presence of the king one of those wanton Greek dances lately introduced into the court. The licentious heart of Herod is smitten with the grace and the growing charms of the girl, and in the drunkenness of his passion he swears to give her whatsoever she should ask, were it even the half of his kingdom. Herodias seizes the moment to satisfy her vengeance against the declared enemy of her disorders. She inspires her daughter to ask forthwith the head of John the Baptist. The king is sorry at his imprudence. He sees now when too late the snare that was set for him. He is ashamed of his weakness. He knows that the blood of the just unjustly shed will tarnish his crown. But love blinds him; and, as we know, that softest of the passions becomes often the most cruel. He orders the death of John the Baptist. "The holiest of the children of men" the most enlightened of the prophets, the most zealous of the apostles, falls under the sword of the executioner, the victim of truth, of the purest charity, of the most interpid zeal.

4. My brethren, the story of the Baptist's life is ended. He did not live in vain. No, as long as the word of truth shall last his virtues will be "a burning and shining lamp" to direct the hearts of men to holiness. His preaching will prepare their souls by penance for the re-

ception of the Saviour. The memory of his death will nerve the just to emulate his zeal and to despise life for the cause of justice and truth.

Let us during those weeks of Advent accompany in spirit those penitent crowds that throng the banks of the Jordan. Let the voice of his preaching find an echo in our souls. Let us cleanse ourselves by a baptism of tears. Thus will the Baptist direct us too to prepare the way for Christ to the royal city of our hearts; that at the coming Christmas we may have the happiness of entertaining the Messias, even Jesus Christ, the "Lamb of God Who cometh to take away the sins of the world."

SECOND SERMON: THE COMMANDMENTS—THEIR SANCTION.

"And the Lord spoke all these words: 'I am the Lord thy God, Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me. . . . I am the Lord, thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands, to them that love Me and keep My Commandments.'"—Exod. xx., 1-6.

1. As is fitting and customary with lawgivers, the Almighty when He promulgated the Commandments, first of all, set forth His titles and prerogatives. This He did in order to give them sanction, and to show forth His claims on our obedience. These claims are four in number. His universal sovereignty, His supreme excellence, His unexampled goodness, and His power to confer unending rewards or punishments.

2. His first title to obedience comes from His universal sovereignty—"I am the Lord." If by the command of God we are obliged to obey our lawful superiors, how much more are we not obliged to obey God Himself? He wields authority over all domains and all orders of being.

3. His second title to obedience comes from His supreme excellence. "I am God." The name of God in all languages signifies the Supreme Being. Being eternal and independent, He

possesses every perfection in an infinite degree, and is, therefore, worthy of all our homage and submission.

4. To this title to obedience He adds a third, namely, His immense goodness. "I am THY *God." "Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt," that Egypt which was covered with darkness and stricken with the plagues, "out of the house of bondage," where you served the stranger. The land of Egypt—a figure of the pagan world from which our God has called us to the light of faith—and the house of bondage represented the slavery to sin and the devil under which the world groaned till we were redeemed by the death of Jesus Christ—the many gifts we possess in the holy Catholic Church. To so accomplish our Redemption and to confer on us the many other favors, what has not our good Saviour done and suffered for us? Duty and gratitude then oblige us equally to the observance of the Commandments, even at the cost of great sacrifices.*

5. A last and no less pressing claim to our obedience is our own interest; since He declares that He has the power to reward or punish us eternally. "I am the Lord—Mighty," etc. It is characteristic of man as distinguished from all the irrational creatures to do all his wilful actions for an end. He looks for the result of his actions and considers whether they will bring him good or evil. And God knowing our essentially selfish nature holds out to us this double motive for the observance of His Commandments as of all the strongest and most binding.

6. Conclusion—to keep continually before us those four great truths, that God is our Sovereign Master, the Supreme Being, our generous Benefactor, and our Judge, with power to reward or punish us eternally.

1. When a lawgiver promulgates a law to be observed by all the people, he first of all sets forth at the head of that law his titles and prerogatives, in order to give sanction to his commands, and show forth his claims on their obedience. It was with the same view that the Almighty, when He promulgated the Commandments from Mount Sinai, opened with those solemn and lofty words. In them He sets forth His titles and prerogatives, so many claims to our obedience, claims which are unanswerable, since there is no one who can dispute their validity or gainsay their greatness. These are four in

number—His universal sovereignty, His supreme excellence, His unexampled goodness, and His power to confer unending reward or punishment.

2. The first title to our obedience to His Commandments comes from His universal sovereignty—"I am the Lord." It is a legitimate title to obedience that one has been set over another; for it is right that there be order in all things, and without submission to recognized authority order cannot be maintained. Hence, holy Scripture commands us to obey those who are set over us; and this not for fear only, but also for virtue's sake, and even when those who wield authority are harsh and perverse. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power but from God, and those that are are ordained of God; therefore he that resisteth the power resists the ordination of God; and they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation." Now, if by the command of God we are obliged to obey temporal rulers and those whom they appoint to a position of authority over us, how much more are we not obliged to give a faithful obedience to the commands of God Himself, since He is the Sovereign Ruler from Whom princes themselves receive their power of governing us? as it is said: "By Me kings reign and lawgivers enact just laws." Nay, He is not only the "King of kings and Lord of lords," supreme, uncreated, independent, Who receives His sovereignty from no one, but He wields His authority, moreover, over all domains and all orders of being. "I Who command," says He, "am the Lord," i. e., the one supreme and independent Ruler to Whom, dominion essentially belongs, and to Whom all other lords are but vassals, and whom a beck of My will could make or unmake in a moment.

3. Two no less valid titles to obedience are set forth in the second member of the preamble, where it is said:

"I am . . . *thy* God Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

Now, the name of God signifies in all languages the Supreme Being Whom the double light of reason and faith shows forth as the Creator of heaven and earth. This God being eternal and independent, possesses of necessity every perfection in an infinite degree, and is, therefore, worthy of all our homage and obedience. He is the great Almighty Whose immensity fills all space and time. Infinite in wisdom, in goodness, in holiness, the perfection of His Being commands all reverence and esteem. But to this claim He adds another still, since He is *our* God—endearing Name! And this Name He lays claim to on many valid titles. Yes, it was He Who "brought us out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Now, the land of Egypt that was stricken with the plagues and covered with darkness is a figure of the pagan world from which our God has called us to His admirable light through the teaching of His Church and the gift of the true faith which He implanted in our souls at Baptism. And the house of bondage represents the slavery to sin and the devil under which the world groaned till we were redeemed by the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ.

O dearly beloved, consider how valid are those claims to our submission which our God puts forth to us in this heading. What would we be, what would we be today if our true God had not taken pity on us and saved us? Consider the state of the poor benighted pagans in Africa, in Asia, and elsewhere, "sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death." See those peoples great, and ancient, and highly civilized as some of them may be; yet bow down and worship stocks, and stones, and devils;

pay homage to their passions and every insensate thing to which ignorance and their own depravity leads them.

4. And out of this state of darkness and slavery has our God called us. Nay, He has endowed us with the freedom of the children of God. See the many gifts we possess in the holy Catholic Church. We have the true faith which conducts us to the kingdom of heaven. We are surrounded on all sides with helps and graces—those Sacraments we are permitted to participate in; the holy Mass which it is our privilege every day to offer; the forgiveness of sins; the Holy Communion to feed and nourish us; and this our God Who dwells continually for us on the altar. Truly, we can say with greater reason than did Moses, the leader of the Israelites: "neither is there any other nation so great that hath its gods so nigh them as is our true God to us to hear the petitions of His people." And do not the words of St. John in the Apocalypse referring to the blessed in some way apply to us who are so privileged as members of the Holy Church? "And I, John, saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice from the throne, saying: 'Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself with them shall be their God.'"

And to accomplish this our Redemption, and to confer on us those other favors, see what our good Saviour has done and suffered for us. Consider His toils, His watchings, His fastings, His austerities, His incessant labors and sorrows during life, till at last He is brought to the suffering and humiliating death of Calvary.

Should not then duty and gratitude oblige us equally to the observance of the Commandments of God and to be

faithful to them till death; aye, even though their observance cost us many a combat and many a trial and sacrifice throughout life?

5. But even still He adds another claim and a no less pressing one; nay, considering the selfishness of human nature perhaps the strongest claim of all, and that is our own interest; since He declares that He has the power to reward or punish us eternally. This He declares in the last member of the preamble: "I am the Lord, thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, and shewing mercy unto thousands to them that love Me and keep My Commandments."

Now, the motives of reward or punishment are ones that have at all times exercised a powerful influence upon human action; and no wonder, considering the essentially selfish nature of man. It is his characteristic as distinguished from the irrational creatures to do all his wilful actions for an end. They are impelled by invincible instinct in their operations; he on the contrary looks forward to the results of his acts and considers whether they will bring him good or evil.

And God Almighty knowing all the folds of the human heart, and comprehending us to the inmost depths of our being, holds out to us this double motive for the observance of His Commandments as of all the strongest and the most lasting. Yes, we may forget the universal sovereignty of the Law-giver; we may become unmindful of His supreme excellence; we may forget past benefits, and show ourselves ungrateful for present gifts. But there are two things that will always powerfully influence our actions; and these are the fear of punishments to come, and the hope of future reward. Hence, His strongest sanction, the Almighty lawgiver reserved to

the end; "I am the Lord, thy God, mighty, in My power to carry out My behests and to reward or punish; jealous, for the faithful observance of My law, and regarding every breach of it with pain and anger; visiting the iniquity of evil-doers with chastisements of various kinds in this life, and with eternal punishments in the next; and even punishing their descendants to the third and fourth generation; and showing mercy unto thousands, to them that love Me and keep My Commandments; that is to say, showering the riches of My bounty on them in this life, and reserving for them the reward of eternal glory: viz., the possession of Myself and a throne in My Kingdom for all eternity in the next."

6. Dearly beloved, I can add nothing to those motives. May they powerfully influence us throughout life, and make us adhere faithfully to the law of the Commandments. And to this effect may we keep them continually before us, and may we reflect daily on those four great truths: that God is our Sovereign Master, the Supreme Being; our generous Benefactor; and our Judge, with power to reward or punish us eternally.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

FIRST SERMON: THE NECESSITY OF PENANCE—TO SINNERS.

"And he came into all the country about the Jordan preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins"—Luke iii., 3.

1. Just as of old, the Baptist was inspired to go forth and preach to the people the Baptism of penance in preparation for the coming of the Messias; so today, in her liturgy, the Church would have him preach to us the old sermons to prepare our hearts for the mystic coming of Christ amongst us at Christmas.

2. The burden of the Baptist's preaching was the necessity of the people's doing penance for their sins. In his sermons he uses several striking figures.

3. From those figures we learn that penance is the remedy for sin: it makes up for past ingratitude; it renders the soul fruitful; it changes worthless chaff ready to be destroyed into the good grain of Jesus Christ to be hereafter garnered into heaven.

4. Penance is necessary for all—first, for sinners as an atonement for sin. By sin we do two evils—first, we outrage God, and, second, we wound our own soul. God's justice demands that the outrage of sin be atoned for either here or hereafter. Penance a merciful resource left by God the like of which He did not give the rebel angels—no remission of sin in hell.

5. The sinner not only outrages God by sin; he wounds his own soul. mortal sin a wound unto death. Force of the words of our Lord—"unless you do penance," etc. Application, exhortation.

1. I have told you, dearly beloved, that the Church devotes the Gospels of those Sundays the second, and third, and fourth of Advent—to the history of the life and preaching of St. John the Baptist. In the Gospel of this, the fourth Sunday, we are told how in the fulness of time the word of God came to the saint in the wilderness, and how by the command of the Spirit he

went forth to prepare the world for the manifestation of the Saviour.

Today the Church guided by the same Spirit of God would have him preach the old sermons, and perform the same office for us in anticipation of the coming of Jesus Christ at the holy season of Christmas. For those Gospels of the liturgy, and the whole season of Advent are intended to inspire us with the spirit of the time, and are as a preparation for the great mystic coming of the Infant Saviour.

2. Now when St. John was sent to prepare the world for the reception of the Messias he found the people living generally as they are today. And what was the burden of his preaching? It was none other than the doing penance for their sins. "Do penance," he would say, "for the Kingdom of God is at hand. You have committed sin. Return to the Lord by the way of penance. Ungrateful children of a loving Father, you pay benefits with injuries, even as the offspring of vipers that lacerate the womb that bore them. Sterile and unfruitful trees, why cumber ye the vineyard of the Lord? Behold, the axe of divine justice is laid to your root. Unless you do penance you shall be cut down and cast into the fire. The Heavenly Thresher is on His barn floor, His winnowing fan is in His hand; He comes to sift His corn. The good wheat He shall gather into His heavenly granaries, but the chaff: it shall be consumed. Ungrateful men, you have learned to sin; learn now to do penance. For unless you do penance you shall all likewise perish." Such was the preparation of heart the Baptist would have men make for the manifestation of the Saviour, and such the Church would have us understand through her liturgy that we are to make in anticipation of His coming today.

Penance is, then, the remedy of sin. It is that which makes up for past ingratitude. It is that which gives fecundity to unfruitful souls. It is that which changes worthless chaff into the good grain of Jesus Christ, to be laid up one day in the granary of Heaven. It is necessary for all. Aye, just or sinners: it is necessary for all. It is necessary to sinners as an atonement for their sins. It is necessary to the just as a remedy against the consequences of sin, and as a preservative against the contagion of sin.

3. It is necessary, first of all to sinners. When we commit sin, dearly beloved, we do two great evils. We outrage God, Whom we are bound by the strictest obligation to adore and serve, and we injure our own souls: we commit a daring outrage on God, I say; and the justice of God demands that that outrage be repaired, either by our acts of penance here below, united to the infinite satisfactions of Jesus Christ; or, hereafter by an eternal punishment in hell. Ah, dearly beloved, what a merciful resource is not this that the Almighty has left us in the practice of penance—a resource the like of which He did not give the rebel angels, whom in "the twinkling of an eye" He cast into hell!

What a merciful resource is penance, I say. For what proportion is there between the sufferings of the most austere penitent that ever lived, and the slightest pain of hell which sin has merited? "Who hath known the power of Thy anger, O Lord," says David, terrified at the thought of hell.

And, O brethren, let the same thought nerve us all to the practice of a rigorous penance whilst God has left it still in our power. Yes, what comparison between the penitence of the few short years of our present life and the eternal chastisements of hell? What are the

most poignant sufferings that we can endure here to the tortures of those fires that shall never be extinguished? What is a tear or a sigh of the contrite heart to the unavailing regrets and everlasting despair of the damned? And, yet, this sigh, this tear of a heart sincerely touched; this short penance of the present life can efface all sins no matter how great they may be, and can disarm the anger of an avenging God; whilst torments extreme in their rigour and eternal in their duration can never appease the Divine anger, nor efface the least fault of the damned in hell.

4. The sinner, I have said, not only outrages God by sin; he, moreover, wounds his own soul. And that wound must be very deep indeed, since at the moment the soul sins, it dies; that is to say, it loses the life of grace the friendship of God, and the right to heaven. "The soul that has sinned," says the prophet Ezechiel, "the same shall die." At the moment it sins it becomes the slave of the devil, and the object of divine vengeance. What an evil, my brethren! And what, the remedy! There is none other than penance. It alone can gain access to the throne of mercy and draw down upon us the precious grace that cures the wound of sin. It alone can avert the everlasting death, of which the soul's present spiritual death is but the forerunner and the cause. This, Eternal Truth Itself assures us of.

At the time that our Lord was preaching in Judea an awful occurrence took place in Jerusalem. A body of seditious men called Zealots, under the leadership of one Judas, the Gaulonite, conspired against the Roman power. As is not unusual in such enterprises, the Roman authorities were kept fully acquainted with the movements of the conspirators; and when the time seemed ripe for action Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor—the same who

afterwards crucified our Lord sent a body of his legionaries down upon them as they were offering sacrifice in the Temple, and cut them to pieces to the last man. The affair caused a tremendous sensation in Jerusalem and throughout all the surrounding country. And, as was customary with the Jews, they began to inquire what crime had these men committed that they drew upon themselves such a calamity: for the Jews always consorted temporal misfortunes of every kind with sin. Our Lord, Who knew so well how to apply the moral of passing events to the subject of His discourses, assured them that on account of no special sin had they brought this catastrophe on themselves. And He concludes, "You have sinned as well as they. Unless, therefore, you do penance, you shall all likewise perish."

And on this point, dearly beloved, I would direct your attention to the full force of the words of our Saviour, as taken notice of by commentators of Scripture.

According to them, these words have the same force and meaning as those other words concerning Baptism, spoken by our Lord to Nicodemus: "Unless a man be born again (to God, by Baptism) he shall never enter the kingdom of heaven."

Now Baptism is so necessary for the effacing of original sin, according to these words of our Saviour and the infallible decrees of the Council of Trent, that the infant that dies without it, though through no fault of its own, can never see God. Even so, I say, the man who, having committed mortal sin, dies without doing penance, either through his want of will or his want of time, can never enter the kingdom of heaven. Penance, therefore, to the sinner, like Baptism to the infant, is absolutely necessary for salvation. "Unless you do penance you shall all likewise perish."

Let us then, dearly beloved, apply during life this salutary remedy to our souls, and try to appease the anger of an outraged God. Alas, who can say that he is without sin? Such a man "is a liar," says the Apostle. "No man knoweth whether he is worthy of love or hatred." By penance alone can we repair the injury done to God by sin, cure the wounds of our soul, and make our election and salvation secure.

SECOND SERMON: THE NECESSITY OF PENANCE TO THE JUST.

"And he came into all the country about the Jordan preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins."—Luke iii., 3.

1. Penance is necessary not only to sinners, but also to the just, and this, first, as a preservative against sin, and, second, as a remedy against the consequences of sin.

2. The maladies of the body, a figure of the maladies of the soul. The former ordinarily leave in the body a disposition tending to a relapse; hence, the necessity of employing preservatives. So, also, with regard to sin, the chief malady of the soul. The best and only preservative against the recrudescence of sin is penance.

3. Concupiscence—the chief source of sin. This smouldering fire must be drenched with the tears of penance, must be extinguished by removal from the occasions, by prayer and self-denial.

4. Penance again necessary to the just as an atonement for past sins. The wisdom of making that atonement here where mercy tempers justice and good works are not only satisfactory but meritorious.

5. Appeal. Striking examples of a penitential life—David, St. Peter, St. John the Baptist, St. Paul. Results of penance.

1. In our last discourse we showed that penance is necessary to sinners. And it is so, both as a reparation of the injury done to God; and as a remedy to cure the wound of sin.

But penance is necessary not only to sinners but also to the just. It is necessary to the just as a preservative against sin, and as a remedy against the consequences of past sins.

2. It is the same with the maladies of the soul as it is with those of the body. The latter may be said to be a figure of the former. Now, although we may be cured of a grievous bodily sickness, there ordinarily remains in our constitution, as a result of it, a certain languor which disposes us for a return of the malady. Against this we have to take precautions. So, also, sin, whether it be actual, and is remitted in Confession; or original, and is remitted by Baptism, leaves in the soul a certain languor which disposes it for new falls. It is a wound which, though healed, leaves a dangerous scar behind. And this scar will again become raw unless we continually use a preservative.

Now, the chief and best preservative against the recrudescence of sin in the soul is penance. It is a preservative which sustains the soul and keeps it in perfect health.

3. In fact, dearly beloved, whence is the source of our sin? Alas! it is within us, says Saint Paul. "There is a law in our members which continually carries on war against the law of our mind." It is our concupiscence that fell and shameful fire that smoulders within us and that is easily enkindled by the presence of objects to which it has an affinity. We must keep down this smouldering fire of concupiscence by drenching it in the tears of penance. We must, moreover, renounce those objects that tend to entice us to the indulgence of sinful pleasures; that is, the occasion of sin. We must go farther still and deny ourselves not only forbidden pleasures but even those that are permitted, if only to train

ourselves in the practice of self-denial. For how otherwise can we resist that inclination that draws us so powerfully to evil?

4. Besides, who so just that has not fallen into many venial sins? Now these sins, like mortal ones, are in their degree so many outrages against God, and merit a proportionate punishment. This punishment must be undergone either in this life, by a voluntary penance, or hereafter, in the fires of purgatory. And is it not wiser to expiate our sins by a salutary penance here where mercy tempers justice and good works are not only satisfactory but also meritorious, than to leave them till hereafter when suffering will be satisfactory alone, and justice, rigorous and unflinching, shall be dealt.

5. Do penance, therefore, my brethren. Renounce sin, chastise your bodies, pour forth the tears of compunction before the Lord. Just or sinners, it is necessary to all—to sinners that they may avert the anger of God and obtain anew the life of their souls; to the just that they may persevere in justice and avoid the punishment to come. Imitate those great penitents spoken of in Scripture and who have been raised up to be models of all mankind. See David: he fell but once, and he remained a penitent all his life. He himself tells us what were those penitential works he practised. "I nightly wash my bed, I bedew my couch with tears; I have mingled ashes with my bread and tears with my drink till my flesh became withered, and my skin hath cleaved to my bones." He cried out continually to the Lord: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy; and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out my iniquities; for I know my sin and my iniquity is always before me."

See Peter, who denied his Master. For that sin he

wept till his eyes became as living fountains, and his tears furrowed his cheeks, even as the streamlet ekes for itself a bed amid the hard limestone. See St. John the Baptist, the holiest of the children of men, the greatest of the prophets, the most perfect of the just, spend his life in the desert. What picture more sublime than that of the evangelist describing his penitential life: "And the same John had his garment of camels' hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat was locusts and wild honey." See Saint Paul. He tells us that he was not conscious of the presence of sin upon his soul; and yet he exercised upon himself a most severe penance. "I so run," he says, "not as at an uncertain prize. I so fight, not as one beating the air, for I know my enemy; but I chastise my body and bring it under subjection, lest while I preach to others I myself become a castaway."

Imitate those noble penitents, I say. Pour forth your sorrow before that God Who "will never despise a contrite and humble heart," and Who has sworn in Scripture to forget the injuries done Him by the penitent sinner. Thus, here below keeping your souls in subjection to the law of God and renouncing the law of sin, you will "avoid the wrath to come;" grow in grace; and merit an exceeding great reward; as it is said: "the short and light tribulations of the present life bear no comparison to the exceeding weight of glory that shall be revealed in us."

THIRD SERMON: "PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE LORD."

"In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being procurator of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee," etc.—Luke iii., 1-6.

1. This passage of the Gospel has both a prophetic and an historic import, and it concerned at once the Jews and the Gentiles—the latter it informed that the God-Saviour lived in the most famous epoch of the world's history—to the former it told that the period marked out for the appearance of the Messias had arrived.

2. It was at this time and in the circumstances described that the Baptist appeared and began to preach the baptism of penance for the remission of sin,—why he preached penance.

3. "The voice of one crying in the desert." In this reply he reminds the Jews at once of the prophetic office assigned him, and of the most famous and consoling prophecy to their nation.

4. Interpretation of the figures employed by the prophet, and applied by the Precursor—its import clearly understood by the Jews.

5. The same God-Saviour Who of old appeared openly to the Jews comes to be born mystically for us and in us at Christmas—His coming for us as for them "a mystery of love and goodness".

6. Our duty therefore at this time is "to prepare the way of the Lord". This is to be done by a thorough renewal of heart by all the people, by a worthy reception of the Sacraments, and by the devotion and fervor with which we take part in the holy Christmas services.

1. This passage of the Gospel taken from the third chapter of St. Luke has both a prophetic and an historic import, and it concerned at once the Jews and the Gentiles, the two divisions that in the mind of the evangelist made up the races of mankind. The latter it informed that the God-Saviour lived in the most famous epoch of the world's history, the golden age of civilization and culture, when Rome for the first time in her history of seven hundred years was enjoying profound peace on all her borders and ruled over the

greater part of the then known world with undisputed sway.

To the former it told that the period marked out for the coming of the Messias had arrived. The scepter had passed from the line of Juda. The kingdom itself of the Jews was parceled out into four tetrarchies or quarters, two of which were under the sway of the sons of the Idumaean upstart, Herod; while Judea itself acknowledged immediately the power of Rome, as represented by the governor Pontius Pilate.

The double incumbency of the high priesthood, moreover, only emphasized the more to the Jews their servitude to the Roman power, to whose imperial policy they were forced to bow.

2. It was at this time and in the circumstances above described that "the word of the Lord came to John, the son of Zachary, in the desert, and he came into all the country about the Jordan preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins." "Do penance," he said, "for the Kingdom of God is at hand." And he conferred the sacrament of washing as a symbol of a change of heart and of a turning away from sin.

But why preach penance at a time which the Jews looked forward to as an era of unbounded joy, when the Messias Himself should come down and rule over them?

It is, dearly beloved, and we should mark it well, because penance alone unbosoms the affections, and prepares the soul wonderfully for the reception of grace. For "the word is a seed," says our Lord. It must be received into a heart prepared and disposed beforehand for its reception. And just as the farmer ploughs up the soil and loosens it as a preparation for the reception of seed, if he would expect a bounteous

harvest; so must we plough up the soil of our soul by heartfelt contrition, and detach it from affection to creatures, if we would dispose it for the reception of grace.

3. This is indicated by the cry of the Precursor: "prepare ye the way of the Lord." Here the Baptist reminds the Jews at once of his office, and of the most famous and consoling of the prophecies; that, namely, beginning at the fortieth chapter of Isaias, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem and call to her; for, her evil is come to an end, her iniquity is forgiven. . . . The voice of one crying in the desert: prepare ye the way of the Lord. Make straight in the wilderness the paths of our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough ways plain, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh together shall see that the mouth of the Lord hath spoken." "I am," said he to the emissaries of the Jews, "neither Elias, nor the great prophet, nor He that is to come, but only His Precursor—the voice of one crying in the desert: My mission is to call upon the people and to say to them in the words of the prophet Isaias, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight His paths; every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low and the crooked ways straight and the rough ways plain.'" Here he makes use of the Hebrew future for the imperative. The meaning is: "let every valley be filled, and every mountain and hill be made low, and let the crooked ways be made straight, and the rough ways plain."

4. But why this figurative language on the part of the Baptist, and what the purport of the figure? Well, in

earlier and less cultured times than those we have experience of, it was customary when a king was about to make a royal entry into one of the cities of his kingdom to send heralds beforehand to announce his coming, and to call upon the people to prepare to give him a reception worthy of his dignity; one of the chief acts of preparation was to lay out the public ways for the passage of his chariot. The depressions in the road were filled up, and the steep declivities were cut down; the ways, sometimes mere bridle-paths, were straightened out, and the obstacles removed, and the citizens themselves were invited to come forth and give him a royal welcome.

And so, the Precursor, accommodating his language to the well-known usages of the time, and to the genius of the people, makes use of this exalted figure: "The appearance of the long-expected Messias is at hand. He the 'Lion of the tribe of Juda' comes to take possession of His kingdom, of which there shall be no end. Prepare ye, therefore, for His worthy reception. This kingdom is within you. Prepare by penance for the entry of His grace into your souls. Let every depression in the way be filled up. Let all diffidence in the goodness of God, all sloth, every want of confidence and correspondence with His grace be laid aside. 'Let every mountain and hill be made low.' Let pride that lifts itself as a mountain *superbia* to oppose the entry of grace be flattened out. Let all crookedness of deceit be straightened out by sincerity and candor of soul, and let all natural defects that hinder the full working and fruition of grace be removed, and all men shall share in the fruits of the Redemption wrought by the God-Saviour."

5. Dearly beloved, in those days the Messias appeared in the flesh among His people. But today the same God-Saviour is about to be born again for us and to make a

mystic entry into our souls. He is to appear among us in the amiable form of the Babe of Bethlehem. Shall we not prepare the way of the Lord? Shall we not dispose our hearts to give Him a worthy reception? This is due to Him not only because He is our God, but also because of the purposes of His coming.

And first, He comes to be born for us. "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was made Man." What dispositions does not this great "mystery of the love and goodness of God for men" demand of us? Mystery of love and goodness "which was manifested openly in the flesh" wherewith a God was clothed on account of our sins, and the accomplishment of which we are about to celebrate. Mystery of love and goodness, "through which the justice and holiness which were in God have been communicated to us"; "of which the angels" on that first Christmas morning "were the first witnesses", "the publication of which was made to the Gentiles", as when the Magi were called to worship at the crib: "the faith of which is spread throughout the earth; and which is now in heaven the object of our eternal happiness". (I. Tim. iii., 16.)

A second reason which ought to oblige us to celebrate holily this feast, and to render ourselves worthy of the graces which God imparts in this time to souls well prepared, is that the Son of God comes into the world to be born in our hearts and to convert them. "By this hath the charity of God appeared towards us," says St. John, "because God hath sent His only begotten Son into the world that we may live by Him," that is to say, that we might share in His divine life. (I. John iv., 9.) This is further shown in His condescension in taking on Himself the ways of men. If He Whom the Scripture calls "the Great Lord" (Ps. xlii., 2) makes

Himself a little one, it is for us. "A Little One is born to us, and a Child is given us" (Is. ix., 6).

If He Who is from eternity is made a Child it is in order to draw us to Him by the sweet bonds and by the caresses of infancy—"you shall find the Infant." If He renounces His liberty—"you shall find Him wrapt in swaddling clothes"; it is to deliver us from the slavery of sin, and to give us the liberty of the children of God. If He sacrifices His honor and glory—"He is laid in a manger," it is to teach us to despise the honors and pleasures of the world. He comes to enter our hearts by grace and to grow in us to the full stature of Christian holiness and perfection.

6. "Prepare ye then the way of the Lord," for His triumphal entry into your hearts by grace. On Christmas eve we begin to carry out in thorough manner this great work of preparation. It is pre-eminently a day of preparation and renewal. Let every soul in this parish then come to Confession on that day, man, woman, and child, let not one be wanting. "Make straight His paths." The true preparation for Christmas is too often lost sight of by the people. They decorate their homes with evergreens. They stuff their larders with good things. Christmas for them too often means only a time of good cheer—turkey, and plum pudding, and candy, and toys, and Christmas trees. These signs of festivity are not forbidden; for the Christmas is a joyous and social feast. For, indeed, "a Child is born to us, and a Son is given us." But if He is, we shall find Him rather in the austere joys proffered by the Church, above all, in the Christmas Mass, in the Banquet at the holy altar rails, in the angels' hymn, and in the other lovely church exercises which remind us so forcibly of the shepherds' joys, and of those of Mary, and Joseph, and the adoring angels, around the humble crib of Bethlehem.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE CIRCUMCISION.

FIRST SERMON: LESSONS OF BETHLEHEM—POVERTY.

1. Introduction. This Sunday known in the calendar as "Vacant Sunday," "Dominica vacans"—this, because it has neither Office nor Mass. One reason for this is that we might reflect the more deeply on the great mysteries surrounding the birth of the Saviour.

2. The most striking fact of the Nativity was the poverty of its surroundings, and its purpose was to destroy one of the great concupiscences that reign in the human heart—the love of riches.

3. Qualities of the poverty of Christ at His birth, first, the most extreme; second, a poverty of His own choice and liking; third, a poverty sanctified by His practice of it and one that should work the sanctification of innumerable souls.

4. The state of poverty, therefore, a matter for rejoicing, for, by it will our lives be made more conformable to that of Jesus Christ. In order to this conformity we must practise the virtues that made His poverty so acceptable to the Heavenly Father. Those virtues are humility, patience, and love—the reward.

1. There is neither Epistle nor Gospel of the Sunday to be read at the Mass today, the Sunday within the Octave of the Circumcision. It has neither Office nor Liturgy, and is known in Church language as the vacant Sunday, "Dominica vacans." One of the reasons that influenced the Church to leave this Sunday out of the reckoning is in order that we might reflect the more deeply on the great mysteries surrounding the birth of the Saviour.

And, indeed, dearly beloved, the stupendous event of the coming amongst us of the Word Incarnate is enough to take up the thoughts of a lifetime, even as its wonders have filled the mind of God from all eternity.

But there are also lessons to be learned by us from the manner of that coming, and these also claim a share of our thought and deep reflection. One of those I will direct your attention to today.

It was one of the purposes of the Incarnation that the Saviour should discharge the office of model and teacher of mankind. And it is remarkable that whilst He accomplished the other great purposes of His life in a short time—whilst He achieved our Redemption by His Passion and death on Calvary, and whilst He established His Church in the last days of His public ministry—His whole life was taken up in His capacity of model and master and in inculcating to us lessons of virtue.

2. Now, amid the many features that marked the birth of our Saviour, perhaps the most striking was the poverty of its surroundings. And this was so remarkable that even the angel who announced it to the shepherds who were keeping the night watches over their flocks on the hills of Bethlehem, pointed it out as its distinguishing trait. "Fear not," he said to them, "for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy that shall be to all the people. For this day is born to you a Saviour Who is Christ, the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you, you shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger."—Luke ii., 10-12.

Now, why, dearly beloved, this poverty of the Infant Saviour? That reason we shall find if we consider the special purpose of the Incarnation. It was to destroy the great concupiscences that reigned in the world. And, first of all, "the concupiscence of the eyes"—the avidity for exterior goods which took possession of all hearts—the love of riches, I say, which is one of the great maladies of mankind and the source which ministers to the other two, namely, the "concupiscence of the flesh," or

sensuality, and the "pride of life," the striving after worldly honors and dominion.

Let us today occupy ourselves with this great lesson given us by the Infant Saviour.

God in the beginning had created man with the design of making him happy by the possession of Himself. Hence, the capacity we feel in ourselves for the possession of the Infinite God. Man through sin had lost God for Whom he was made; but he did not lose the inclination to be happy. Torn from the great Good Who ought to have made his happiness, he seeks elsewhere for something to fill up this great void. Hence, that multiplicity of desires that nothing can satisfy. Hence, that insatiable avidity for exterior goods which St. John calls "the concupiscence of the eyes"—avidity which is one of the three great branches of cupidity which reign in the world. Hence, that esteem of riches, and that horror of poverty. Hence, in the rich that secret complacency in their riches, complacency which attaches them to them. Hence, in the poor that aversion for their state, that impatience, those murmurs which render them really miserable—cupidity, fatal source of all injustices and crimes which made the world a great mart of chicanery where everyone sought to circumvent his neighbor and thrive upon the wrong done him.

3. It was to cure us of this malady that Christ, when He came into the world, was born in poverty. But what a poverty!

A poverty the most extreme that can be imagined. A poverty of His own choice and liking.

A poverty that He sanctifies and leaves to the Church as a heritage the most holy—the imitation of which shall achieve the sanctification of innumerable souls in every age to the end of time.

I say, the poverty of Christ at His birth was extreme. Could He in fact have carried the practice of poverty to greater lengths than He did in His birth at Bethlehem? I pray you, dear brethren, to mark all the circumstances of that birth, and the selection of events and persons which help Him in the practice of this virtue.

He chooses for His Mother a Virgin illustrious, indeed, from her ancestry, but of a family decayed and fallen into poverty. He whom He chooses for His foster-father is a poor carpenter who earns his bread by the labor of his hands. The city where He is born is indeed the city of David, His ancestor, but it is now little better than a hamlet; and He is born in it as a stranger. The place of His birth? It is a stable by the wayside. His cradle? It is a manger. Behold the damp straw on which He lies. Behold the poor rags that cover Him. Could He have carried the practice of poverty to greater lengths than He did? Could He not have said at His birth, what He said later on in life: "the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not whereon to lay His head."

Ah, dearly beloved, let us adore this poverty of Jesus which He willingly underwent for love of us, and which has sweetened the lot of the truly poor in all ages.

But the poverty of Jesus was not only extreme; it was also a poverty of choice.

In the circumstances of our birth, nothing is of our own choice; all depends on the providence of God. It depends not on him who comes into the world whether he be born in a palace or in a stable; upon a cushion of state or upon a pallet of straw; to be the child of a queen, or of a slave. But it was not thus with our God. All in this was His own choice. It was He Who selected

the time, the place, the surroundings of His happy birth. It was He the Eternal Wisdom Who chose the state, and the manner, and the circumstances, in which He should appear in the world.

What do we learn from this, if not the Saviour's contempt for riches, and if not to despise them likewise? What do I say? Is this simple contempt? Is it not a manifest reprobation of attachment to riches, and the eloquent approval of a life of poverty?

Ah, I am not surprised that the Son of God in after life launched his maledictions and his anathemas against the love of riches. The very first words of Christian morality taught us in the Gospel, are they not a commendation of a life of poverty? "Blessed are the poor in spirit." It was only an echo of what He taught far more substantially and efficaciously by His birth in the stable of Bethlehem.

But it is not a simple esteem of, or preference for, poverty. It is a sanctification, it is a benediction, it is a consecration of the state of poverty. It is a consecration of a state in which innumerable souls of every age and sex should sanctify themselves afterwards in the Christian world. For Jesus Christ sanctified everything He touched. He appears in the world a little Child, and He sanctifies infancy and changes it from being a state where the child was a mere chattel that might be enslaved or destroyed at the whim of the parent, into one where it commands the care and respect of all. He enters the Jordan and at His touch the element of water is given power so as to be made the matter of the Sacrament of Baptism. He presides at a marriage banquet and blesses the nuptial union and lifts it from being a mere natural contract to be a Sacrament of the Church with power to confer Sacramental and sanctifying graces. He

passes along the crowded street, and at His presence a new society springs up, regenerated and sanctified, to carry the blessings of salvation to the ends of the earth. He retires into the desert, and at His presence the wilderness blooms as a garden, producing a race of men of whom the world is not worthy. He hangs upon a tree, and from that time the cross which was an anathema and a curse, becomes the symbol of salvation to all men. He dies; and behold, that which was from the beginning the penalty of sin, is made the passage to a glorious resurrection and unending happiness. He therefore sanctifies poverty in becoming poor for love of us, rich and infinitely rich as He was in the bosom of His heavenly Father. Hence it is that we see in the Gospel that His blessings are for the poor; that His favors are for the poor; and that they are for the rich only in as far as they are poor in spirit and detached from riches.

Blessed then are the poor who are conformed to Jesus Christ by their state; but blessed only if they are at the same time poor by love and inclination: since it is this conformity that works their sanctification and their glory.

4. See then, dearly beloved, you who are poor in this world's goods that you be truly poor by affection and practice. And if at any time you feel the inconveniences that poverty entails take heed lest you give way to murmuring and complaints. Rather rejoice when you feel its pangs: for thus will your life be made the more conformable to that of Jesus Christ. And to this effect urge yourselves by frequent meditation on the surroundings of the birth of Christ in Bethlehem.

Learn also to sanctify your state by the practice of those virtures which made the poverty of the Babe of Bethlehem so acceptable to His Heavenly Father.

What are those virtues? When I say humility was one

of the virtures that accompanied the poverty of Christ, I speak only of what was of necessity. For humiliation and contempt are the lot of the poor, and Christ joyfully underwent the humiliation and contempt inseparable from the state He embraced for love of us, and He bore all the insults that were heaped on Him in His poverty.

Again, He practised patience in a divine degree. See all the privations to which He was exposed at His birth coming into the world as He did in that dreary hovel in the depth of winter, and feeling the pangs of cold; and, yet, no cry, no look of murmuring or complaint, but a sweet benignity of expression which told of the soul resigned and trusting absolutely in the providence of His Father.

And, lastly, love; aye, love of that Father in obedience to Whose command He came to earth; and of man for whose salvation He emptied Himself of the riches and glory that were His.

So, also, you dearly beloved, sanctify your state of poverty by the practice of the virtues which naturally accompany it and make it acceptable to God.

Be humble, and accept joyfully the humiliations which your state of life is necessarily subject to. Be patient, and take joyfully to the privations which your state of poverty necessarily entails: for, without this virtue a poor person is both a torture to himself and a source of constant irritation to others, and he loses the most delightful opportunities of merit.

And, lastly, love God and your neighbor; for this is the fulfillment of the whole law, the sovereign virtue which gives form and merit to all other virtues, and without the practice of which all other virtues are useless and unacceptable to God.

Thus your poverty will have point and object in it, and

the slight tribulations it will cost you here will bear no comparison to the eternal weight of glory that shall be their reward in heaven.

SECOND SERMON: LESSONS OF BETHLEHEM—CHASTITY.

1. Introduction. Our Lord was born in poverty in order to correct one of the great vices that reign in the world—the irregular love of riches. Today I want to show that He set Himself from His birth to contradict another of the great vices to which men are addicted—viz., the irregular love of pleasures. Amplification.

2. This He did by willing to practise from His birth the most austere self-denial.

3. He wished further to teach us a love of suffering as an antidote to self-indulgence which first brought about our fall. Hence, it was that at His birth He united in order to suffer the more so many painful circumstances.

4. In this school of Jesus Christ we are taught to suffer not only with patience, but also to rejoice in our sufferings. Witness its results on the shepherds, the martyrs, and especially on those professing the religious state where heroic self-denial is practised as the ordinary.

5. Magnificent eulogies pronounced by the Fathers of the Church on virginal chastity.

6. The example of this heroic virtue first given to the world by our Lord and His blessed parents.

7. Appeal to sisters to prize the religious life and the virtue that marks it with the seal of nobility in the sight of heaven and earth. The precautions to be taken for its preservation, prayer, custody of the senses, the retrenchment of pleasures and the practice of mortification, and, finally, frequent meditation on the sufferings of Jesus at His birth in Bethlehem.

1. When commenting on the lessons conveyed to us by the Saviour at His birth, I told you that He came to correct one of the great concupiscences that reigned in the world, namely, the irregular love of riches.

And this He did by Himself being willing to be born in the midst of poverty.

Let me today continue the same subject, and show you that in the same birth He contradicted another of the great vices to which men are addicted. Dearly beloved, if the love of riches is one of the great maladies of sinful man, this other of which I speak is neither less dangerous nor less shameful; nay, it is one more dangerous still, because it seems more natural, and it serves to nourish and strengthen in us this irregular love of riches. This is the love of pleasures—a shameful malady which is the effect of sin and the source of a thousand crimes; one which, moreover, blinds us and decoys us into the most frightful precipices. This irregular love of pleasures is the strongest passion in the human heart—the most fell source of sin in the world, and of the eternal destruction of men.

In fact, since that fatal pleasure tasted by our first parents in eating the forbidden fruit, everything is unruly in our hearts. The slave of the flesh and of the senses, we feel a violent inclination for earthly gratifications. The beauty of creatures is become a snare for us, and our passion allowed to have its way knows no other rule in their use than the satisfaction of its desires.

Such are we when left to ourselves and when we follow the inclinations of nature. Hence, that corruption of all flesh, of which Scripture speaks. Hence, that deluge of disorders in the world. Hence, those shameful vices which the apostle forbids to be even named among Christians, but which the corruption of the world renders so common. Hence, that love of sensible satisfactions, and that hatred of suffering that we all have so much difficulty to overcome.

2. Now, this evil leaning in our heart is one of the chief things that Christ came to remedy, and to this task He devoted Himself from His infancy by the practice of the most austere self-denial.

When the angel announced the birth of the Messias to the shepherds who were keeping the night watches over their flocks, the mark he gave by which He might be known was that "the Infant was wrapt in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger." What a clothing for a delicate Infant, in mid-winter, and what a cradle for the King of heaven and earth!

But let us with the shepherds "go over to Bethlehem, and see this word that is come to pass." The Saviour might have been content to preach penance from His glory seat. But behold a preaching far more efficacious. It is the sight of Jesus suffering, and suffering from His birth in order to detach us from the pleasures that we love, and to make us love the suffering that we hate and fly from.

Approach and see; what is here to flatter the senses? A half-ruined stable by the wayside through which the winter-winds moan. Behold what the Saviour opposes to the luxurious houses and surroundings which serve to our vanity and pleasure. A few baby clothes to cover a shivering Infant from the cold wintry air; these He contrasts to the comfortable and warm clothing in which we wrap our bodies. The heavy breathing of the animals; these He opposes to the lubrical concerts and licentious songs which carry so much the more subtly poison to the heart as they flatter the more agreeably the senses. A little straw on which the King of the universe lies; this He contrasts with the luxurious softness of our beds. He who nourishes the whole universe is Himself content with a little milk. This He

opposes to the variety and delicacy of our food and the sumptuousness of our feasts. Sufferings and sorrows He contrasts to our sensuality and luxury. Let us justify, therefore, if we can our indulgence of pleasure and our hatred of discomforts. Ah, it is not in the school of Jesus Christ that we have learned this love or this hatred. What resemblance is there between the Master and the disciple, between the Head and the members? "The animal man," says St. Paul, "cannot taste the things that are of God." Carnal wisdom is opposed to God. It is to confound it that Jesus Christ is born in this state of suffering.

3. But it was little for our Lord to teach us to fear, and to fly from, and to avoid voluptuousness. The pagans themselves had learned how hurtful it is, and many among them could give lessons on this head to Christians of our days. Our Lord wished to raise our thoughts higher, and His crib is a school where we learn a lesson which nature inspires not, which human philosophy teaches not, which the wise of the world have not tasted; I mean to say the love of suffering. Yes, Lord, this is the lesson which you teach us today by your crib and your tears. You commence already to say to us what you taught us later on: "Blessed are those who weep." "Blessed are those who suffer," because they are conformed to a God weeping and suffering. We already begin to hear from the lowly pulpit of Your crib that word so hard to self-love, but so sweet to faith and charity: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself."

Self-indulgence it was that first brought about our fall. It is through sufferings alone that we can be saved. It is by them that we can expiate our sins, cure our evil inclinations, purify our heart, offer to God the

[illegible] of our mind and body, and merit the chaste delights that are tasted in heaven.

But how could this salutary medicine become supportable to us, bruised and wounded as we are, if our Blessed Lord had not by taking it first Himself sweetened its bitterness. Hence you see why it is that at His birth He united in order to suffer the more so many painful circumstances: the place, it is a rude shed altogether unfurnished; the time, it is mid-winter, it is midnight; the state, it is the most entire poverty; His consolations, they are His tears. He commences from His birth the sacrifice which He was to consummate on the Cross.

4. But these are the tears and the mortifications of a God! Who takes the bitterness of them on Himself only that He may soften ours; Who submits to them only in order to make us look on them otherwise than we do, and in order to encourage us. It is here in fact that poverty, and sufferings, and tears, change their nature. It is in this school that we are taught to suffer not only with patience, but to rejoice in our sufferings. As I see come out of this school the poor shepherds content with their lot and filled with joy. Such is the effect of the tears of Jesus Christ. I see come out of it innumerable troops of martyrs, who cry out with the Apostle: "I am filled with joy in the midst of my tribulations." I see numbers of Christians of every state and condition of life who, despising the pleasures and amusements of the world, lead a life conformable to Jesus suffering and Jesus sorrowing, and who thus attain eternal life.

But more particularly than all do I see, from the example of the Saviour despising the comforts of life and undergoing a life of suffering for our sake, a new state

spring up in the Church whose aim is to perpetuate the divine life of Jesus here on earth, and to make manifest to all men the supernatural influence of grace on the members of His Church by the practice of heroic mortification. This is the religious state—a state which crystallizes the sublime example of Jesus suffering, and manifests to all generations and to all peoples the divine character introduced into our lives by Christ through the vow of chastity made by all its members. How grand, how ennobled is holy religion rendered by the practice of this lovely virtue, and what a glorious spectacle in the sight of men and angels the spectacle of members of every sex and condition rise so high above the promptings of nature as to live in the practice of heroic self-denial which the faithful observance of the vow of chastity requires.

5. No, dearly beloved, there is nothing excessive or exaggerated in the magnificent eulogies which the Fathers of the Church have pronounced on virginal chastity. Some, as St. Augustine, say that it is the "glory of the earth," "the heritage of angels," and "an imitation of the life of heaven," "an apprenticeship to eternal incorruption which we serve in mortal and corruptible flesh." Others, as St. Cyprian, that "it is the most brilliant flower that adorns the garden of the Church"; or, as St. Jerome, that "it is the sole grain that produces the hundredfold"; or, again, that "it is the virtue of Paradise," and that "the earth is unworthy of it." All, that it is the most precious of gifts and the triumph of grace over the inclinations of nature. But however magnificent as are those expressions, we must avow that this heavenly virtue is above all their praises.

6. Now before our Lord Himself gave the example of it this practice of heroic self-denial, if you except the

cases of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, was unknown in the world. The pagans had uselessly affected the phantom of it. Among the Jews sterility was a reproach, and fecundity of the womb alone passed with them for benediction. If there were among them holy men who lived in celibacy, such as Elias, and Elisaeus, and others of the prophets, it was not believed that the weaker sex could attain to a virtue so elevated. Jesus Christ, therefore, suffering in His Childhood and suffering throughout life is the Master Who has ennobled and sanctified suffering and self-denial, and Who has taught the children of a debauched and debased race a virtue which is peculiar to the angels and to heaven.

7. Rejoice, therefore, you especially, dear sisters that this heavenly Teacher has called you to the observance of this angelic life. Prize it and prize the virtue that characterizes it and marks it with the seal of nobility in the sight of heaven and earth. And that you may be able to observe it inviolably through your life, take those precautions that are necessary for its effectual observance. What are these precautions?

When I say that you are to pray continually for grace to practise chastity, I say only what Scripture itself teaches and what the Wise Man tells us is indispensable for its observance. "And I knew," says Solomon, "that I could not otherwise be chaste except God gave it; and this also was a point of wisdom to know whose gift it is; I went, therefore, to the Lord and besought Him for it, and prayed with my whole heart."

Secondly, you must watch over your senses and close them against the attractions of creatures. You must, moreover, retrench all pleasures, not only those that are dangerous, but even those that are useless; all dissipation that can soften the heart and weaken or divide

the mind, and you must avoid all worldly and profane amusements that can awaken in you the love of and the spirit of the world. It is to this end that holy religion hedges you round with so many rules and observances, which prevent the encroachments of the world into religious houses.

And, lastly, you must mortify yourselves and lead truly penitential lives in order to preserve this precious virtue. It is a rare lily that grows only among thorns. It is a wisdom that is not found with those who lead a delicate life. To preserve it, therefore, you are to lead truly penitential lives, and be, as it were, dead to the world.

That you may animate yourselves to its practice, meditate often on Jesus suffering and Jesus sorrowing in His birth, the truest Model of religious mortification and of perfect chastity that the world ever saw.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE FINDING OF THE CHILD JESUS IN THE TEMPLE —LESSONS OF FIDELITY.

In the Performance of Our Religious Duties.

"When Jesus was twelve years old, they going up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast and having fulfilled the days; when they returned, the Child Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and His parents knew it not. And thinking that He was in the company they came a day's journey, and sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And not finding Him they returned into Jerusalem seeking Him."—Luke ii., 42-52.

1. Introduction—As, first, the text of today's Gospel has reference to that incident in our Lord's life which forms the subject of the fifth joyful mystery of the Rosary, and, as second, you, my listeners, are for the most part votaries of the same great devotion, a discourse on this mystery will be in harmony as well with the spirit of the day as with your own most hallowed sentiments.

2. Observation—The holy founder of the Rosary selected for subjects of the mysteries those incidents in our Lord's life that intimate to us the scope of the Incarnation, or that are best adapted to convey to us lessons of virtue. His reason for this was, because the end of meditation is not so much to enlighten the mind as to train the heart.

3. Out of the many lessons conveyed to use in this mystery I select that of fidelity, first, in the performance of our religious duties; second, in time of trial; third, in the carrying out of the great mission of life.

4. The beautiful example of piety given us by Joseph and Mary. The holy dispositions that accompanied their act.

5. In contrast with these, first, the profanity of many Christians in our days, who neglect the most sacred duties which religion imposes; and, second, in those who do attend to the practices of religion, what imperfection in conduct and intention! Superiority of the worship offered in our churches to that offered in the temple of Jerusalem. With what reason, then, will not God expect of us a greater fidelity and holier dispositions than those which animated the Jews.

In Time of Trial.

1. Our Lord's motive in staying behind in Jerusalem without the knowledge of His parents was to give us a lesson of fidelity and submission to God's will in time of trial—causes which led to the separation of Jesus from his parents. They betray not in their grief a word of murmur or complaint against the divine will or any exhibition of human weakness.

2. God often hides Himself from us and leaves us in aridity and darkness of soul. This He does in order to train us in the spiritual welfare, and to wean us from a love of sensible consolations which impede our union with Him. Spiritual consolations, the weak food of childhood. Adversity and spiritual privations, on the contrary, the bread of the strong in which true virtue is proved, and abundant merit gained.

3. We must in time of trial and privation look out in hope and patience for His return. We shall find Him, not in worldly avocations or in conversation with men; but, like Mary and Joseph, in prayer, and amid the teachings and teachers of holy religion.

In the Great Business of Our Eternal Salvation.

1. Christ's early occupation with His father's business. Our great mission in life, the salvation of our souls. Its importance. How many fail in the conduct of this business. Such lose touch with the true purpose of life, till they finally suffer shipwreck of their salvation.

2. Lesson given us on this occasion by our Lord, of unflagging fidelity to duty. Threefold mission of our Lord. He carries out that mission in spite of every opposition. His present duty, to prepare men's minds beforehand, and to arouse expectation of the speedy coming of the Messias, especially among the great concourse of people assembled on the occasion of the feast.

3. Conclusion—To thank Eternal Wisdom for this lesson of zeal, and to take to heart the threefold example of fidelity given by Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

In the Performance of Our Religious Duties.

1. The text of this Gospel has reference to that incident in our blessed Lord's life which forms the subject of one of the mysteries of the Rosary—the fifth joyful mystery. As all of you are votaries of the Rosary

devotion, and as many of you are, moreover, members of the confraternity of the Rosary, I feel I will not be out of harmony with your sentiments, or with the spirit of the day if I devote this discourse to the consideration of this mystery.

2. And with regard to those mysteries I would ask you to observe that the founder of the Rosary selected not the incidents in Our Lord's life that were the most striking in themselves, but those that he considered would be most useful to reflect upon.

Thus, he did not select the flight into Egypt, or the miracle of Cana in Galilee, or the Baptism in the Jordan, or the Transfiguration, or the many other miraculous events related of Him; but only the few incidents in His private life that show us the scope of the Incarnation, or that were best adapted to convey to us lessons of virtue. And the reason is at once obvious. For the end of meditation is not so much the enlightenment of the mind as the training of the heart. The understanding of great religious truths makes us, indeed, theologians; but only the application of the virtues suggested by these truths to the government of our lives sanctifies us.

3. Now, in the consideration of this mystery of the Finding in the Temple, out of many thoughts suggested by the sacred text, I will take up three; and we shall see that, just as the lesson conveyed to us in the mystery of the Presentation in the Temple is one of consecration and sacrifice; so the lesson conveyed to us in this mystery is one of fidelity —fidelity in the performance of the duties of religion, in the custom of Mary and Joseph of going up year after year on the solemn festivals to worship in the temple of Jerusalem —fidelity in time of trial, by their conduct during the

three days' loss—fidelity in the great mission of life, in the conduct of Our Lord, Who remains in the temple, as He said, that He might be "about His Father's business."

4. The first lesson that the meditation on this mystery teaches us is, I have said, one of fidelity in fulfilling the holy duties of religion.

How beautiful is the example of piety given us by Mary and Joseph. Notwithstanding their poverty, and the fact of their living at a distance of over sixty miles from Jerusalem, yet was it their custom to go up on the great solemnities of the year to worship in the temple. Nor did the circumstances of their being obliged to carry with them a tender Child; nor, yet, the inconvenience of remaining many days from home, restrain them. They read in the law the will of God, which ordained that all the people should present themselves in the temple during these festivals, and this alone regulated their conduct. And with what holy dispositions did they not conform to the law; with what purity of intention; with what holiness in thought and affection; with what reverence in their exterior conduct? Ah, dearly beloved, Mary and Joseph are true models to us in the practice of our religious duties, and in imitating them we attain to true sanctity.

5. But, oh, profanity of the times in which we live! how many Christians in our days who make no scruple of neglecting the most sacred duties which religion imposes, and who take advantage of every pretext to rid themselves of the obligation of fulfilling the most common and easy practices of the Christian life?

How many are there amongst us who frequently neglect the Sunday's Mass? How many who neglect

the Paschal duty, even when obliged to it under pain of mortal sin and threat of excommunication? How many who never think of entering a church to attend evening devotions, or to pay a visit to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament; and to whom the great solemnities of the year would become unknown were it not for the fact that these solemnities offer an occasion for worldly pleasure, if not, indeed, for the unlawful indulgence of the passions?

And amongst those who do attend to the holy practices of religion, what imperfection of conduct and intention; how many distracting thoughts; what want of purity of motive; what levity and absence of solid piety? Ah, brethren, here in our churches is offered a Sacrifice greater than those that were offered in the temple of Jerusalem! Here is daily offered the true Paschal Lamb. Here dwells in reality, though under Sacramental forms, the same God who was present in figure only, in the temple. Here are conferred Sacraments of greater efficacy and holiness than those that sanctified the Jews. With reason then will God expect of us a greater fidelity, a more exact fulfilment, a more perfect motive, in the discharge of the sacred duties prescribed by holy Church for the worship of God and for our own sanctification.

In Time of Trial.

1. But let us go on to the consideration of the second lesson suggested to us in this mystery, namely, the fidelity of Mary and Joseph in the bitter trial of the loss of Jesus.

What could have been the motive of our Lord's

staying behind in Jerusalem without the knowledge of His parents, and thus causing them such sorrow? That motive was to give us a lesson of fidelity and submission to the will of God in the trials that beset us. Mary and Joseph had been guilty of no fault against prudence or watchfulness in permitting Jesus to stray from their company. Separated from each other in that great throng which numbered on occasions such as this over two millions of souls, each thought that the Divine Child was in the other's company. At the end of the first day's journey they were made aware that He was nowhere to be found.

Filled with grief they seek Him among their relatives and acquaintances. They seek Him on the way, and in the city. Mary, especially, is filled with anxiety for His safety. For, mindful of the prophecy of the aged Simeon, She fears that His enemies might have waylaid Him. Have they hurried Him away? Have they begun the open persecution against Him which She knows to be in store for Him? The only joy of her immaculate heart she can cry out with the Magdalen at the sepulchre: "They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him."

Yet, through all this trial, the greatest of Mary's experience till that of the Passion, not a word of murmuring or complaint against the divine Will, and no exhibition of human weakness only too frequently to be met with in the like circumstances.

2. All this is a lesson for us of fortitude in adversity, and submission to the will of God in the trials to which He subjects us. How often do we not find by personal experience that our Lord hides Himself from us and leaves us in aridity and darkness? This is to

train our souls in the spiritual warfare, and to teach us not to trust too much in sensible consolations.

These He usually gives to beginners in His service, and they are the milk imparted to children, as it were, before they are strong enough to digest the hard bread of adversity and spiritual privation, in which true virtue is proved and abundant merit gained.

3. Dearly beloved, we must during the periods of trial and privation with which God proves us all, with Mary and Joseph look out in hope and patience for His return. If we would find Him we must seek Him, not among our acquaintances; not among our relatives; not in the streets of the crowded city; but where He is always to be met with, in the house of prayer; in the temple of His Father; in the midst of the teachings and teachers of religion where the Eternal Wisdom will animate us with new strength and enlighten our minds with heavenly doctrine.

In this occupation is He found, on the fourth day by Mary and Joseph. "He is found in the temple, in the midst of the doctors disputing with them and asking them questions," an occupation which He calls "His Father's business."

In the Great Business of Our Eternal Salvation.

1. We all, dearly beloved, have been entrusted with a great business by our Eternal Father; and that business is the salvation of our souls. How important attention to that business is one consideration alone will convince us—namely, that on each act of our lives depend eternal consequences. "Before man," at each step, "is life or death"—life in his fidelity to, death in his neglect in, the discharge of this business.

And oh, how many fail in the conduct of this business and bring upon themselves eternal penalties! Like vessels that have strained their anchors and are tossed to and fro on the wide ocean till, finally, they are stranded; those souls, having lost touch with the true purpose of life, are borne helplessly along in the pursuit of earthly gratifications, till, finally, they are cast on the quicksands of life, derelict of grace, having suffered shipwreck of their salvation.

What is the lesson we are to learn from our Lord's conduct on this occasion, and from His reply to the anxious inquiries of His holy Mother?

2. It is a lesson of unflagging fidelity in the prosecution of the great business of our salvation. See His conduct on that, as on other occasions. He was sent into the world on a threefold mission—to redeem the human race—to restore and develop revealed truth almost lost among mankind—and to show us the way to regain our lost virtue by His own divine example.

And how faithfully does He not go to His work and carry it through in spite of every opposition! He is confronted by prejudice. He is confronted by ignorance. He is confronted by the cupidity and hatred of men. He has to meet domestic foe and open enemy; yet, does He discharge faithfully His commission.

As to the present, the time of His public mission has not yet come. But He must prepare men's minds beforehand. He must raise hopes amongst the Jews concerning the near approach of the Messias, and therefore is He found in the temple in the midst of the doctors, interpreting the prophecies concerning the Messias at that special time when the great council of the Sanhedrin is sitting; when the priests are

assembled from all parts of Judea; and when some couple of millions of the laity from all regions of the known world are gathered together within the precincts of the holy city.

This is the reason why He enters on the discharge of this great work at this particular time. Though as yet a Child in years, He shows Himself possessed of wisdom more than human, and thus He prepares the foundations of the future Church by lessons given in His boyhood.

3. Let us thank Eternal Wisdom for this lesson of zeal conveyed to us in this answer to His blessed Mother; and let us take to heart the example given us in this mystery, of fidelity to the sacred duties of religion—fidelity in the midst of trials and dereliction—fidelity to the great business of salvation entrusted to us by our Eternal Father Who gives us as our models and teachers the holy personages, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

SECOND SERMON: THE SACRAMENTS.

"You shall draw waters in joy out of the Saviour's fountains."—Isaias xii., 3.

1. Beautiful figure contained in the prophecy. It was customary with the prophets to make allusions to well-known facts in the history of their nation and this for two reasons given.

2. The event alluded to by the prophet was the miraculous production of water from the rock by Moses in the desert and the Saviour's fountains are the Sacraments of the Church. "And the rock was Christ."

3. It is desirable that we have a thorough knowledge of their nature and of the dispositions required for their worthy reception—purpose—appeal.

4. Their definition, analysis of, and explanation.

5. Their agreement with and difference from the sacraments of the old law, as given in the famous decree of Pope Eugenius IV. to the Armenians and by St. Augustine.

6. Summary and appeal.

1. It was a beautiful figure indeed, and one that called up a pleasing prospect to the dweller in the parched and sultry south—that contained in the words above quoted from the canticle of Isaias. And it had reference to the good things that were to be inaugurated under the benign reign of the Messias.

Now, it was usual with the prophets when they announced to the people of their time events that were to happen in the distant future, to make allusion to well-known facts in the history of their nation, and this they did for two reasons: first, to recall to their minds with gratitude or fear God's providential dealings with them in the past; and secondly, to make these events a sign and an assurance of the fulfilment of the prophecies made by the same God through their ministry.

2. But to what event in the history of the Jewish people do the words of this passage refer, and what are the good things promised under this beautiful figure: "You shall draw waters in joy from the fountains of the Saviour"?

Well, dearly beloved, the event alluded to by the prophet is one that occurred to the people of God shortly after their delivery from the bondage of Egypt. And it is told in the book of Exodus that while they were wandering in the desert, they came to a place where there was a great scarcity of water. The people were in great distress, and appealed to Moses to procure them wherewith to quench their thirst and save them from the miserable death that threatened them. And Moses gathered the whole multitude of the people together, and, after reminding them of God's goodness to them in delivering them from the tyranny of the Egyptians and of the innumerable other proofs of His merciful providence towards them, he struck with his rod a great

rock that stood in the midst of the desert; and behold, to their great astonishment and joy, a fountain of delicious water issued forth to satisfy their thirst and fill the camp with gladness.

And the Saviour's fountains referred to in the prophecy are none other than the Sacraments of the Catholic Church — fountains that have their source in the inexhaustible reservoir of the Sacred Heart, "and the rock was Christ." And the waters that we are permitted to draw with joy therefrom are the graces of the Redemption, salutary waters which wash us and refresh us and produce in us a true justice. For Christ is indeed, according to the apostle, "the spiritual rock," lifted up in the desert of the world, the only source of supernatural life left us after the cistern of original justice was broken by the fall of man.

3. And now, since the Sacraments are so many fountains of divine grace springing up for us in the Church through the bounty of the Saviour, "welling up into life eternal"; and since the outpouring of the graces of the Sacraments may be said to make up the life of the Church during her pilgrimage on earth, it is above all things, desirable that we should have a thorough knowledge of their nature and of the dispositions required for their worthy reception.

I purpose, therefore, with the help of God, to go through for you during the coming months, a course of instructions on the chief points relating to their administration and their worthy reception.

And may I bespeak on your part, dearly beloved, an attentive hearing of those things so necessary to be known and practised by you during life; things that have so important a bearing on your welfare here and hereafter; an attention that will be shown by your numbers in

coming to the lectures, and by the intelligent interest you will show in their treatment.

And, first of all, we shall inquire into the nature of the Sacraments of the New Law, and how they differ from those of the Old. What, then, are the Sacraments?

4. The Sacraments are, as the Catechism tells you, so many "outward," that is to say, "sensible signs instituted by Christ to give grace"; or, if you will, they are so many "visible signs of invisible grace instituted by Christ for our justification and sanctification." They are signs; for, besides the thing they represent to our senses, they make known to us an invisible grace which is communicated to our souls. "They," says St. John Chrysostom, "exhibit one thing to the eyes, another to the mind;" they are "external signs," signs which fall under our senses. We see the action of the minister of the Sacrament; we hear the words he pronounces. This act and these words signify, and furthermore produce in the soul of him who receives the Sacrament, a grace which we do not see. These signs were instituted by Christ. For a Sacrament is not a natural sign of grace, but an arbitrary one which denotes grace and operates it, only dependent on the will of God, Who instituted it to this effect.

These signs denote and operate our sanctification; that is, they make us holy and agreeable to God, whether it be by bestowing on us the life of grace which we had not before, or by increasing and strengthening in us the sanctifying grace resident already in our souls.

5. Now, the Sacraments of the New Law have this in common with those of the Old, that the ones and the others are sacred signs which denote grace. For, the Sacraments of the Old Law signified not merely legal and external holiness which they imparted, but also grace

which was communicated to men in anticipation, through the merits of the Passion of Jesus Christ. But (and it is an article of faith defined by the Council of Trent, sess. 7, can. 2) the difference that exists between the Sacraments of the Old Law and those of the New does not consist alone in the fact that the external ceremonies are different. Pope Eugenius IV., in the famous decree issued by him to the Armenians, makes another difference and one more essential and important still which comes from this that the Sacraments of the Old Law, being only shadows and figures of those of the New, had not the power to confer grace. They signified merely that grace would be given us through the merits of the Passion of Jesus Christ. But the Sacraments of the New Law are not only signs that grace will be given, but they contain in themselves grace, and have power, through the merits of Jesus Christ, of conferring it on those who receive them worthily. "They," says he, "did not cause grace, but only prefigured that it would be given through the Passion of Christ; but these, our Sacraments, both contain grace, and confer it on those who worthily receive them." St. Augustine explains this difference in other words, but ones which signify the same thing. He says that the Sacraments of the Old Law and of the New are not the same, "because the ones give us salvation; the others only promise us a Saviour."

6. To sum up, then: the prophet Isaias, who lived nearly a thousand years before Christ, foretold, under the beautiful figure of fountains of grace and divine gladness, the institution of the Sacraments which we enjoy. The Sacraments are signs of grace instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ for our justification. With the Sacraments of the Old Law, they denote grace imparted to the soul of the receiver, but in contra-distinction to them, which are

merely signs of grace given in anticipation through the merits of the Passion of Christ; they both can note grace, and impart it of their own power and efficacy.

Let us adore the wisdom and power of God, Who, under the weak figure of sensible signs, has given us the most powerful helps to our sanctification, and Who, through their agency, perpetuates and makes universal the graces won for us through the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

FIRST SERMON: MARRIAGE—A GREAT SACRAMENT; ITS CHARACTERISTICS.

"There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the Mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and His disciples to the marriage."—John ii., 1-2.

1. Introduction. Happy the marriage of the young couple honored with the presence of the holy personages referred to in the Gospel, and abundant the blessings poured out on them by Jesus Christ! As proof of this not only were their souls enriched with grace, but our Lord performed in their favor His first miracle.

2. Remark—Marriage nowadays not held in the respect it deserves—the shocking levity exhibited by Protestants in entering into the holy contract—the shameful and unnatural sins committed by married parties pertaining to the sects—the high percentage of divorce among those outside the Church. Even Catholics treat marriage with great levity.

3. Marriage a great Sacrament: Represents, first, the hypostatic union of the Godhead with the Humanity in Jesus Christ; second, the union of the Bridegroom with His Church on Calvary; third, the unity and indissolubility of that union.

4. Marriage may be considered, first, as a contract; second, as a Sacrament; third, as a state. Was not always a Sacrament. Instituted by God in paradise and as the means appointed by Him of the honorable propagation of the human race; as such, a natural contract, and a lifelong one at that.

5. The very first act of our Lord in His public life was to bless and sanctify the marriage union, hence, the first of the Sacraments in the order of their institution. From this we can infer, first, how holy is marriage; second, how important a part it plays in the purification of family life and the sanctification of mankind; third with what respect it ought to be treated.

6. As a Sacramental state it confers special helps on the married parties, and this as long as the marriage union lasts.

7. Characteristics of marriage. Unity and indissolubility for a time remitted by God. This gives occasion for the questions of interest: What is to be said of divorce, so common among us? And what of polygamy, as formerly practised by the Mormons? A temporary sanction of polygamy was given by God for reasons that no longer exist. Divorce was tolerated by Moses "be-

cause of the hardness of heart" of the Jews. Both institutions were abolished by our Lord and on the same occasion.

8. The assumption of jurisdiction over matrimony by the lay authority, a usurpation and an intrusion into the sacred domain rightly belonging to the Church.

9. Conclusion. Summary,—reward of those who live holily in the married state.

1. Happy indeed was the marriage of the young people referred to in this Gospel, a marriage that was honored with the presence of Jesus Christ, and His blessed Mother, and His disciples; that is to say, with the holiest company that ever lived on earth. And beloved by the Master must those have been who merited such a condescension. And who shall say how many were the blessings poured out upon them from the inexhaustible source of the Sacred Heart? Not only were their souls enriched with the gifts of grace which sanctified them in their new state, but they experienced in a sensible manner, moreover, the effects of the goodness and providence of their Divine Guest. For, the wine failing at the marriage feast, our Lord, at the prayer of His holy Mother, performed in their favor His first miracle by changing water into wine.

This remarkable event in our Lord's public life and the underlying purpose of His presence at this marriage feast of Cana, in Galilee, determine me to speak to you today on the important subject of marriage.

2. And, now, the first remark I have to make is, that many nowadays do not hold marriage in the respect that it deserves. And when I say, so, I do not mean to apply my words at all to those who are outside the Church. It was natural that they, I mean the members of the hundred and one non-Catholic sects that exist in the United States, England, and elsewhere, having

introduced disorder into all religion, should, as a matter of course, degrade the institution of marriage.

And hence, not to speak of the levity with which marriage is burlesqued in their playhouses and sometimes, I am ashamed to say, in their church fairs; not to speak of the freak marriages that take place between young people nowadays in every conceivable situation: out at sea, in the cages of wild beasts, up in a balloon, to set off a night's orgy—in situations where the most fantastic engagements would not be undertaken, the most solemn life engagements are, with the greatest levity, entered into; not to speak of the shameful and unnatural sins often committed by married parties pertaining to these sects, and which they are encouraged to commit not only by false political economists, but sometimes even by the teachers of their religion; do we not see that the number of divorces that are sought and obtained bear a high percentage to the number of marriages that take place between members of these sects within the year?

I speak of Catholics, and I say, people who have the greatest respect for the other Sacraments of the Church; who prepare for their reception with the greatest care and reverence, often talk of marriage with the greatest flippancy; treat it as if it were a matter of mere temporal concern; enter the married state with scarce any preparation, or without being animated with any motive other than a low, selfish interest or passion; and live in it without thought of its pressing duties and responsibilities.

3. Against such as these I raise my voice, and say with the Apostle: No; "marriage is a great Sacrament!" It is a great Sacrament in the sight of God and of His Church. It is a great Sacrament; because it represents

some of the greatest of the mysteries of our religion: the union, namely, of the Divine Word with mankind, and of Jesus Christ with His Church. For, as the Word of God, descending from Heaven, espoused our nature in such a manner that after the union of the two natures, the Divine and the human, there is present but one Person; so marriage unites two human beings in such a manner that they in many respects form but one moral personality. And as the Precious Blood flowing from the Saviour's side on Calvary formed His Church, united her to Him in the mystic bonds of love and charity, and made her the mother of a progeny as numerous as the stars of heaven; so also the marriage union was to be in the mind and intention of God, the source whence should spring generations of men and women who were to people the earth with saints and heaven with souls of the beatified.

Moreover, as the union contracted by Jesus Christ with His Church is a union, one and indissoluble, a union that should last throughout all time; so it was God's will that marriage should be a union one and indissoluble; that is to say, that it be a union of one man with one woman, and at the same time so binding that it can be severed only by death—a union so strong that by its force it overcomes all other unions formed by nature or by the human will. This Adam declared in that prophetic announcement he made when introduced by God to his consort, Eve: "This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh."

4. Now marriage may be looked on either as a contract, or as a Sacrament, or, finally, it may be considered

as a state. Speaking to an enlightened congregation like you, I need not labor to inform you that marriage was not always a Sacrament such as we revere it in the Church today, and we can distinguish two phases or stages in its history.

If we ascend to the origin of man, we shall find that marriage was instituted by God in paradise. This He did when taking the founders of our race, He joined them in holy wedlock, and, blessing them, He bade them "increase and multiply and fill the earth" with their progeny. It was thus the means appointed by God for the honorable propagation of the human race, who, it was His will, should be derived by the way of generation from these first two founders. As such it was a natural contract—a contract by which man and woman bound themselves to live in social intercourse; to be a help to each other in all the relations of life; and especially in the discharge of the sacred duty of rearing up their children in the love and fear of God. Thus it was in the olden time, both under the law of nature, and under that of Moses, down to the days of Jesus Christ.

5. But our Blessed Saviour, having come to earth to reform mankind vitiated by sin, He would act in order and begin by sweetening the fountain of human society, the family, and endowing it with Sacramental graces. Hence we see that the very first act of His public life was to preside at the nuptial contract and sanctify it. It was not, therefore, in the guise of a mere guest that our Lord attended at the marriage feast of this young couple. He attended in order that He might preside at the nuptial union, and bless, and sanctify it. Hence, from this time, according to the common opinion of interpreters of Scripture, marriage takes its place as the

first of the Sacraments in the order of its institution, even as the sanctification of family life is, in its very nature and in the intention of God, the first element in the sanctification of mankind and in the reformation of society.

From this consideration, dearly beloved, we can infer how holy is marriage; how great a part it plays in the purification of family life, and the sanctification of mankind; and, hence, with what reverence it ought to be treated, as well by those who propose one day to receive it, as by those who have received it already.

6. As a Sacramental state it accords with (and I want to impress this deeply on the married parties who may be listening to me), it accords with the other Sacramental states existing within the Church, such as is the sacerdotal or priestly state, in this, that it confers special helps for the proper discharge of the duties consequent upon it; and these, not alone at the time the marriage is contracted, but through all the days that the marriage union lasts. And even as the priest at his ordination enters on the possession of a right to receive throughout life special lights and graces to enable him to discharge the high functions of his office as priest; so, also, in consequence of the state assumed by the contracting parties in marriage, they enter on the possession of a right to those special helps necessary for their state, such as to enable them to love each other with a pure, Christian love; to bear mutually with each other's imperfections; and to bring up their children in God's holy fear and love.

7. I have said, dearly beloved, that from the beginning God gave marriage two special characteristics—unity and indissolubility. It is true that, later on, He remitted the unity of marriage, as we see in the case of sev-

eral of the patriarchs and others to whom He permitted a plurality of wives; and we know, moreover, that He tolerated the *libellum repudii*, or divorce among the Jews; but, as our Lord told the Pharisees, "from the beginning it was not so," and in the latter case we know "this was on account of the hardness of men's hearts."

Be the reasons as they may, the fact of their having been sanctioned or tolerated by God at all, raises some important questions which have a special interest for the people of this country and of our time. We see every day the columns of the newspapers filled with divorce cases sought for and granted by the civil courts and at the sentence of the civil judges. We have, besides, in our vicinity the sect of the Mormons, who, up to recent times at least, practised polygamy, and who are said by many to do so still. What is to be said, then, of the practice of polygamy in our days, and what, of the custom of looking for and obtaining a bill of divorce at the hands of civil judges.

As to the first question, let me say that polygamy as an institution was abolished by our Lord, who recalled marriage to its primitive purity and unity. This He did when in answer to the question of the Pharisees He replied: "Have you not read (in the law) that He Who in the beginning made man made him male and female" and He, that is, God (not merely Adam who uttered these words under inspiration), said: "On account of this a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife," (mark, his wife; not his wives) "and they shall be two (and no more), in one flesh." Polygamy as an institution was killed by that regulation of our Lord, and it has never since been tolerated in Christian society—and it was only the carrying out the traditions of our holy religion that the

American people through their rulers refused full civil rights to the unsavory sect of the Mormons as long as they followed in face of the law this lustful and un-Christian practice.

As to the custom of divorce, which is so common today and which is so great a blot on our American civilization, it also was abolished by our Lord, and on the same occasion. For, in answer to the Pharisees tempting Him, He replied, that the putting away of one's wife, or divorce, was hitherto tolerated by God solely "on account of the hardness of their hearts"; but that in the religion founded by Him it would not be so: "therefore," He adds, "they (the married couple) are now not two, but one flesh. What, therefore, God has joined, no man may part asunder—Matt. xix., 4-8. And this ordination our Lord lays down more clearly and emphatically in Sts. Luke and Mark where He is represented as saying: "Everyone that putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery, and he that marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery- Luke xvi., 18; Mark x., 11-12.

This fact, the indissolubility of the marriage tie, is admitted by the most upright of the members of the non-Catholic sects and it only shows the degeneracy of morals among the members of these sects consequent on their rejection of Catholic teaching and practice that divorce in our day has become so common as to be looked upon as an ordinary matter, and that re-marriage of divorcees, that is, public concubinage, is tolerated among them.

8. As to the assumption of jurisdiction by the civil authority over the sacred institution of matrimony; this also is one of the evil signs of the times, when "fools

rush in where angels fear to tread," when sacrilegious hands are laid by the lay authority on an institution divine in its origin and in its essence, and thus pertaining solely to the supervision and jurisdiction of God's Church.

9. See then, dearly beloved, a great Sacrament truly in marriage; great in its origin, which is from the Almighty, and this while our first parents were still in a state of innocence; great in its elevation by our Lord to the dignity of a Sacrament; great in its signification; since it is the symbol of the hypostatic union of the God-head with the Sacred Humanity in the Incarnation, and of the mystic union of Jesus Christ with His Church on Calvary; great in its unity which must never again be interfered with, and in its indissolubility; since "What God hath joined no man may part asunder;" great, finally, in its end, which is the sanctification of the family and society—the peopling of earth with saints, and of heaven in the hereafter with the beatified. Learn, then, to pay to it the respect which is its due, you who propose to yourselves to receive this Sacrament and to enter upon this state, by representing to yourselves high and holy ideals regarding it; and by preparing for its reception with reverent dispositions becoming its dignity and holiness, and its importance to your whole future; and you, who are already engaged in this state, by corresponding faithfully with its great and many graces; that fulfilling its responsibilities with fidelity, and bearing patiently its trials, you may merit the reward of eternal life for yourselves; and be, moreover, the parents of a progeny of saints who will honor God by their lives in this world, and possess Him forever in the next.

SECOND SERMON: MARRIAGE—ITS CLAIMS—RACE SUICIDE.

"This is a great Sacrament, but I speak in Christ and in the Church."—Eph. v., 32.

1. Introduction—Marriage in a former discourse considered as a contract, as a Sacrament, and as a state. On the same occasion were expounded its essential characteristics, its unity, viz., and its indissolubility. Cardinal Gibbons puts those characteristics somewhat differently in saying that it is the most ancient of all contracts, the most exclusive, the most sacred, and the most inviolable and irrevocable. Today I treat of the rights of the marriage contract.

2. Principle—The primary end of marriage as instituted by God in paradise was the honorable propagation of the human race. To this end He blessed our first parents and endowed them with fecundity. From that day one of the claims or rights of the marriage contract consists in the obligation of the married couple's so using marriage that offspring be capable of being begotten thereby, and that, furthermore, such offspring be preserved and fostered.

This claim so essential to the Sacrament that the parties who contract on the condition, first, of using marriage in such a manner as to frustrate or impede generation, or, second, of limiting by unlawful means the number of children to be begotten by them, or, third, of destroying the offspring so begotten before its birth, render thereby the contract null and void.

3. A widespread and still-growing abuse of married life exists all over this commonwealth, whereby all kinds of expedients are employed to frustrate generation, or to destroy the progeny before it is given birth to. In this the rights of God, of humanity, and of their offspring, are violated by the criminal parties.

4. The legend of Polyphemus and his ravages, race-suicide more disastrous to human life than was the Sicilian giant. The eye of conscience in the paricide cannot be extinguished; hence, the consciences of the guilty ones a very hell of unhappiness

5. Appeal to beware of the temptation to commit the crime and to reject the advice of false teachers so rampant in our time who advocate its commission.

6. The dread scourge of war now devastating Europe a manifest sign of God's vengeance on sin, especially on this sin which is destroying infant life wholesale and rendering whole populations murderers. The sin the greater as it not only

destroys the bodily life of the innocent babes, but even deprives them of the possibility of attaining eternal life.

7. Terrible occurrence related in Jewish history as the consectary of the sacrilegious murder of the priest Zachary in the temple of Jerusalem—vengeance exacted by God through means of the terrible conqueror Nebuchodonzor. The same God today punishes some awful crime. Is it this of race-suicide?

1. In my former discourse when treating of marriage I considered it as a contract, and as a Sacrament, and as a state. On that occasion I expounded its essential characteristics; its unity, namely, and its indissolubility. Cardinal Gibbons when treating of the same subject puts those characteristics somewhat differently in saying that it is the most ancient of all contracts, the most exclusive, the most sacred, the most inviolate and irrevocable.

It is the most ancient of all contracts; he says, for our first parents were the first contracting parties; the Garden of Eden was the scene of the union, and God Himself was the minister and sole witness of the espousals.

It is the most exclusive: for a husband can have but one wife, and a wife but one husband. A third partner is wholly excluded in the Christian dispensation from sharing in the union, and no other married union can take place until the death of the one or the other of the contracting parties do them part.

It is the most sacred of all fellowships; for the Eternal Father is its founder, Jesus Christ is its restorer and reformer, and the Holy Ghost is the divine fire that welds together two hearts in unquenchable love. Christ raised marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament—"a great Sacrament"—according to St. Paul. For it is the symbol of the union of Christ with His Church and of the Divinity with the Humanity in the Incarnation.

And lastly, it is the most inviolable and irrevocable of all contracts that were ever framed. Every other human contract, he says, may be lawfully dissolved but this. Nations may be justified in abrogating treaties with each other; merchants may dissolve partnerships; brothers will eventually leave the paternal roof and separate from one another. But by the law of God the bond uniting husband and wife can be dissolved only by death. For, "what God hath joined no man may part asunder."

2. Let me now touch briefly on another matter pertaining to the same Sacrament.

When Almighty God instituted marriage in the garden of paradise, the primary end He had in view was the propagation of the human race, which He willed should be derived from the honorable and becoming union of man and woman. To this effect He blessed our first parents and endowed them with fecundity, saying to them: "Increase and multiply and fill the earth" with your progeny. From that day one of the claims or rights of the marriage contract consists in the obligation of the married couple's so using marriage that offspring be capable of being begotten thereby; and that, furthermore, such offspring be preserved and fostered. And this claim is so essential to the Sacrament that the parties who contract on the condition of using marriage in such a manner as to frustrate or impede generation, or of limiting by unlawful means the number of children to be begotten by them, or of destroying the offspring so begotten before its birth, render the contract thereby null and void; and, this, because to the essence of the marriage contract pertains the obligation, and this a perpetual one, of using marriage according to nature.

3. Now, dearly beloved, as we look at the conduct of married couples all over this great commonwealth in relation to this essential claim of marriage, what is the prospect that meets our view? Do we not see a widespread and still growing abuse of married life, where all kinds of expedients are employed to frustrate generation, or to destroy the progeny begotten before it is given birth to; and this without regard to God, the Institutor of the marriage contract; or to humanity in general which is outraged thereby, or even to the life of their own offspring which they ruthlessly destroy?

4. We read in the classic authors of a giant who of old lived in Sicily, that island which some years ago came into such notoriety by reason of the most terrible of catastrophes. Horrid and monstrous was his appearance. A shaggy head and face surmounted a body huge and uncouth. One eye alone protruded from the center of his forehead; and when he appeared abroad a full-grown pine tree served him for a staff, as he strode along like a moving mountain. Huge tusks protruded from his ever-open jaws which dipped with foam and blood. And the bodies of two full grown men formed his daily meal after which he retired to his great dark cave in the mountain side to sleep off in a drunken swoon the surfeit of his murderous repast. And as a result of his bloody raids the whole country around was depleted of its inhabitants.

My brethren, a monster more terrible and more ruthless in his devastations than Polyphemus has invaded this great country. Others may call him by different names. I call him "homicidal selfishness," and not the bodies alone, but the souls, aye, the immortal souls of innocent babes form the toothsome morsel for his murderous maw. Already he has worked desolation in

other parts of the country, notably in some of the eastern states. But he has made raids, too, on this western board. Aye, and his ravages are felt even in this fair city of ———. He always tries to do his work in the dark; and, hence, he blinds as far as he can one of the eyes—the eye of conscience—of those who are his dupes and who perform his murderous behests. Ah, but the light of that eye cannot be utterly extinguished; and, hence, in after life, through it there glimmer lurid lights of remorse that sting and torture the soul—hissing snakes that make their presence felt and render life a very hell to those guilty ones, no matter how surrounded with worldly wealth or pleasure.

5. Beware, brethren, of that guilty monster; and no matter what may be the trouble you may have to meet in life; no matter what the difficulty in rearing a family, resolve that never will you appear before God hereafter in judgment with the mark of Cain upon your brow, your hands stained with unnatural blood, the blood of your own offspring. Beware of the temptation! Beware of false teachers who tell you that families must be limited to the means and other circumstances of the married parties. These are blind guides who stumble themselves and who drag others with them into the ditch. My brethren, beware!

6. And this leads me to speak to you on a matter that follows as a consectary to what has been said by me above. The whole world stands aghast at the terrible destruction of human life in the great world war that is today devastating the fairest countries of Europe. And the faith of many in God's kindly providence has been shaken and they ask: "Is Christianity then a failure?" and, as was blasphemously said to me some time ago by one who has unhappily lost the faith: "If

there is a God. He is a funny God Who would let such things occur."

Others, and they the more thoughtful in the community, who in the beginning were inclined to look upon the war as the result of racial and commercial jealousies, are now beginning to see in it a masterstroke of divine justice.

We know that for the greater part of a century the Christian world has for the most part turned its back on God, ignored His presence in the world of affairs, and trampled on His most sacred laws. We know, furthermore, that a wholesale destruction of infant life has taken place through the corruption that has invaded married life in those as well as in other Christian countries. It is fresh within the memory of us all that the miscreant who directed and carried out the notorious murder of the Bollinger baby justified himself on the plea that a thousand abortions were perpetrated daily in the city of Chicago.

And so it is in the other great cities of the United States: in Boston, in New York, in Philadelphia, in St. Louis, in San Francisco, in Seattle. So it has been in France, in England, in Germany.

Can the just God Who has said in Scripture, "Vengeance is Mine, and I will repay," look on unconcerned and see those souls "made to His own image and likeness," and redeemed with the Blood of His only Son, murdered wholesale by their unnatural parents, and deprived forever of the sight of His Divine Essence for which they were ordained, and not take vengeance on the murderers?

7. We read of a terrible occurrence that took place in Jewish times, an occurrence which made such an impression on the nation that eight hundred years after-

wards our Blessed Lord would seem to refer to it in His last terrible denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees, "Fill up the measure of your fathers." He said to them, "Serpents, spawn of vipers, how will you escape the damnation of Gehenna? For, lo, now I send you prophets, wise men, doctors: some you will kill: others you will crucify; you will scourge them in your synagogues, you will persecute them from town to town; so that all the innocent blood shed upon the earth may descend upon you, from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zachary, son of Barachias, whom you slew between the temple and the altar. I say unto you of a truth that all those things must fall upon this present generation."

Who was this Zachary, the Son of Barachias, the fatal results of whose martyrdom were so remarkable that our Lord links his name with that of Abel, the type of injured innocence, and whose blood, Scripture tells us, "called to heaven for vengeance?"

The Book of Chronicles tells us that he was a prophet who was slain in the temple by the people at the instigation of the wicked Joas, their king. And as a result of his murder in the very sanctuary, God brought down on the murderers the army of the Syrians who slew the princes of the people, and carried away the spoils of their city and temple, and permitted the murder of the wicked king.

Nor was this all. For the Talmud, that great compilation of the records of the Jewish race, tells us that for two centuries and a half the blood of the murdered prophet gushed forth from the spot where he was slain, and could not be washed away.

It tells us, further, that Nebuchodonzor, the great conquering king of Chaldea, who destroyed the city and

temple, and carried the people away into captivity, saw in the temple the blood gush from the spot as bright as the day upon which it was first shed.

Fain to appease it he brought certain of the Rabbis to the place and slew them. Still the blood gushed forth with ever the same even flow. He seized some children who were returning home from school and immolated them upon the same spot; nor yet was the blood appeased. He summoned thither certain young priests and massacred them there; and still the blood continued to gush forth. What shall I say? Nearly a hundred thousand victims were slain without checking one whit the flow.

Whereupon, drawing nigh the spot, Nebuchodonzor cried: "Zachary, Zachary, thou hast destroyed the flower of thy people. Wouldst thou have me extinguish them utterly?" At those words the blood ceased to gush forth from the place; God's vengeance for the murder was appeased.

My brethren, in thinking over those terrible occurrences that are taking place in the world in our day, does not the haunting thought occur to us that the God of vengeance is punishing some colossal crime? And that crime, may it not be the wholesale murder of the innocent babes, by race-suicide, and that He will not be appeased till the flower of the manhood of those countries perish, and the whole people be left in mourning?

My brethren, I say again, beware of the guilty monster of parricide, of unnatural crime committed in the sanctuary of the married state. And no matter what may be the difficulty in rearing a family, resolve that never will you appear before God hereafter in judgment with the mark of Cain upon your brow, your

hands stained with unnatural blood, the blood of your own offspring.

Beware of the temptation, beware of false teachers who tell you that families must be limited to the means and other circumstances of the married parties. These, I say, are blind guides who stumble themselves and who drag others with them into the ditch.

My brethren, once again I say, Beware!

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

FIRST SERMON: MORTAL SIN—ITS EFFECTS ON THE SOUL.

"And behold a leper came and adored Him, saying: 'Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean.' And Jesus, stretching forth His hand touched him, saying: 'I will; be thou made clean,' and forthwith his leprosy was cleansed."—Matt. viii., 3.

1. Introduction—Leprosy among the most hideous and malignant of diseases. The malady described. Ostracism and misery of the leper. A lively figure of mortal sin and its effects on the soul. These effects subject of discourse.

2. Premises—The just here possess two important supernatural goods, first, the supernatural life of their souls, and, second, the right to heaven. Prerogatives of the soul in grace—its power to advance in merit.

3. Mortal sin robs the soul of all its beauty, its riches, its ornaments, its right to heaven, the presence and consolation of the Holy Ghost, transforms it into a devil, and makes it the very slave of hell.

4. Deplorable condition of the sinful soul described. God's designs over it frustrated—disappointment among the beatified.

5. Evils that have regard to the life to come greater still. God, notwithstanding His goodness and mercy and His relations to the soul, compelled to sentence it to hell; description of hell. Deplorable blindness of men to look on such an evil as a trifle and a thing of no account.

6. Mystery, how a finite being like man can commit an infinite offense, one which merits an infinite punishment. Theological argument.

7. Only the sufferings and death of a Man-God could make atonement to God on account of sin.

8. The sight of the multitude of our sins might well make us despair had we not the happiness of hoping in the mercy of God, which surpasses all the malice of our lives. This mercy we can count on only in as far as we repent sincerely of our past sins, and as we practise a true penance. Resolution.

1. The disease of leprosy from which our blessed Lord cleansed this poor man was one of the most hideous and malignant to which the human body was subject.

It commenced in the stricken one with the appearance of white scales or patches on the skin which in time corroded the flesh so that the members rotted joint by joint. In this condition the body emitted a frightful stench, which pervaded all the neighborhood.

In this sad state the unfortunate was driven forth from the society of all, even his nearest relatives, and compelled to lead a dying life in the tombs and caves, till, finally, death came to relieve him from his intolerable woes.

Dearly beloved, the fathers of the Church discover in this disease of leprosy a lively figure of mortal sin and its effects on the soul.

By sin the sinner covers his soul with intolerable sores, and separates himself from the society of God and the blessed. Though apparently alive, he is in reality dead, and filled with the rottenness of the grave. He, I say, leads a dying life among the tombs, the companion of the lost, and destined one day to be buried with them in hell.

All this suggests to me to speak to you today, dearly beloved, on the frightful subject of mortal sin.

And, now, as the subject is a large one and it would take too long to treat it fully in one sermon, I will treat it in parts and will speak to you today on the effects of mortal sin.

2. That I may do so with clearness, let me first premise by saying that we the just here possess two important supernatural goods. The first supernatural good which we enjoy is the life of our soul. I do not mean its physical life which cannot be taken away from us, because the soul was created to live forever, but its supernatural life — an altogether divine life which consists in sanctifying grace, and without which, according to our

Lord Himself, we would be in a worse condition than if we had never been born. This sanctifying grace, together with the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost which are inseparable from it, gives to our soul a supernatural life which renders it so beautiful, so charming in the eyes of God that He carries His love for it to an inconceivable degree. He looks upon it as His well-beloved and dear daughter; Jesus Christ treats it as His spouse; the Holy Ghost dwells in it as in His sanctuary. It is infinitely pleasing to Him. He loves it, as He tells us, "with an everlasting love."

To this, our first supernatural good -to the happy state of a soul in grace- a second is added which is incomparably greater still, and it is the right to eternal glory. From the moment a soul enters the state of grace it becomes an heir to the kingdom of Heaven. Its name is written in the Book of Life. There are waiting for it in the mansions of God a throne and a crown. Moreover, for every good work that it does there are awarded it so many new gems that shall shine for all ages in the superb diadem with which it shall be crowned. To this effect an account is kept of all even its smallest actions that are done for God. A glass of cold water given to the poor, a holy thought, a pious desire, a good wish; all are marked in the book of merits. "A single hair does not fall from the head of the just man"; that is to say, according to the interpreters of Scripture, that he does no good work however small it may appear, of which there is not kept an exact account. What treasures of merit, therefore, cannot a soul in the state of grace amass in the space of fifty or sixty years?

3. But, alas! dearly beloved, there is need of only a single mortal sin to deprive such a soul entirely of so

many goods, and to render it poor, naked, and miserable. Yes, by a single mortal sin, its beauty is changed into a deformity so frightful that nothing is capable of giving us a just idea of it. Holy Scripture makes use of some comparisons to show us how great is the deformity of a soul in the state of sin; but there is nothing in nature that approaches it. It speaks of the blackness of coal; it speaks of cauldrons filled with blood; it speaks of mildews and cesspools; but what are all these in comparison to the horror of a soul in sin? It is true also that it compares the state of the sinful soul to that of the devils, assuring us that a soul in mortal sin is not only like a devil, but that it is itself a devil. "Do I not call you my disciples, and yet one of you is a devil?"

O unhappy sinners, as long as you are in the state of mortal sin, you carry devils within you: you are yourselves devils. It is our Lord Himself that says so. It is a devil then that makes you act. It is a devil that sees by your eyes. It is a devil that speaks by your tongue. It is a devil that walks by your feet. It is a devil that acts by your hand. Great God, what a frightful state! Hence comes the horror that God has for a soul in the state of mortal sin; a horror so great and incomprehensible that, if His mercy did not withhold His avenging arm, He would squelch that cursed soul the moment it committed its act of sin.

Ah, it is at that fell moment that it loses all its riches; that it is stripped of all its ornaments! It is at that moment that its name is blotted out of the Book of Life; and that the place that had been marked for it is given to another. It is at that same moment that the devils write its name in the book of the damned, and that they mark its place in the abyss; that they cele-

brate a festival after their own fashion, and that they rejoice in their new conquest. It is at that sad moment that the Holy Ghost is cast out from that criminal soul, and that the devils are installed in it, and make it their abode. And how do they treat it? They bind it; they put it in chains; they buffet it; they make it the object of their sport; they treat it as the vilest slave.

4. Such is, my brethren, the deplorable state of a soul fallen from grace into the state of mortal sin. Behold all the designs of God in regard to it overturned! Behold the Passion and Death of the Saviour rendered useless! Behold the image of the Creator defaced by His enemies! And what are the sentiments of the angels and saints when they see a just soul, a friend of God, a disciple of Jesus Christ, an esteemed heir of Heaven, their dear companion, the object of their love and complacency, that poor soul fallen into the state of mortal sin? Ah, if their state permitted it how would they not lament and sigh! Their joy would be changed into grief. Their songs of gladness would cease. The courts of the Almighty would resound with funereal notes, and Heaven would become a place of tears and woe.

5. But terrible as are the evils of sin with regard to the present life, they are as nothing when compared to those that have regard to the life to come. Pay attention to this which I am about to say, dearly beloved. God is infinitely good, just, and merciful. You cannot doubt it. These are so many articles of our faith. Nevertheless, this God, infinitely good, just, and merciful, full of tenderness and love—this God, I say, condemns a soul to hell for a single mortal sin. Yes, for a wilful impure thought; for a criminal desire; for a bad action which lasts only for a moment; for a wilful

omission of an essential duty: for this single sin, which has passed like a lightning flash; which has given him who committed it only the satisfaction of a moment; and which has left him only regrets and remorse of conscience; God condemns this soul, which is His image; His creature; His child—He condemns it to hell. And what is hell? Ah, how terrible is the answer! Hell is the accumulation of all evils. It is the privation of all good. It is the treasure house of the anger of the Almighty. It is an abyss of fire; a frightful dungeon where are enchained the state prisoners of the Sovereign King. It is a region where everlasting horror and confusion dwell. It is an abode where the damned suffer a raging hunger, and a burning thirst; an excessive heat, and an insupportable cold; pains, and torments, and fury, and despair, which cannot be conceived or explained; and this without solace, without respite, without hope. But what is inconceivably beyond all thought, is that all these evils, all these torments, are eternal; that is to say, truly infinite in their duration.

O mortal sin, how terrible you are! O monster! O abyss of evil without bottom, without measure! Who could have ever dared to commit you if he truly considered what you are? And, O deplorable blindnesss of men to cast yourselves over such a precipice, and, after doing so, to make no account of it; to eat, and drink, and laugh, and play, and to look upon it as only a trifle and a thing of no account.

6. But how can it be, you will ask me, that a man who is a creature, and therefore, limited in his being and in his actions let us say, rather, who is a mere nothing compared to the uncreated being of God –how can he commit an action which contains an infinite malice, and which, therefore, merits a punishment infinite in its

duration? This is a mystery, I avow; yet there is nothing more certain, for it is a truth which faith teaches. To form some idea of it we must bear in mind what theology teaches regarding it; that is to say, that the greatness of an offence is drawn from the dignity of him who is offended, and from the vileness of him who commits the offence. On this principle an outrage done by one man to another increases or diminishes in proportion as he who offends, and he who is offended, are great or little in their station, or in their worth. For example, an outrage committed against a peer of the realm by a man of low station is much greater than if the same offence were committed against an ordinary subject by the same offender. But if it were a king, if it were the Sovereign Pontiff that he had offended, the outrage would be incomparably greater still. And thus the sinner who is only a worm, who is only dust and ashes, in attacking with inconceivable insolence his God; in rising in revolt against the Supreme Being, infinite in greatness, in sanctity, in all perfections, is guilty of an outrage which is infinite and inconceivable, and which merits, therefore, an infinite punishment; but a punishment which can be so only by its duration, which is without end.

O mortal sin, I repeat, how terrible you are! O abyss of evil! And, O deplorable blindness and fury of men who commit it without scruple or remorse, and who afterwards laugh and divert yourselves, and treat it as if it were a trifle, and a thing of no account.

7. Let me tell you that on account of it it was necessary that one of the Persons of the blessed Trinity should satisfy for it. Consider well this which I am about to say. There is nothing more convincing, and at the same time more terrifying. If God had created a hundred

thousand worlds; and if He had peopled each of them with millions of personages as holy as St. John the Baptist; nay, as perfect as the holy Mother of God herself; they could never, by their good works and penance, satisfy the justice of God outraged by a single mortal sin. And the reason is that mortal sin contains an infinite malice, and all the satisfactions of creatures could never reach the infinite. It was only the humiliations and sufferings of a God made Man that was capable of making this atonement.

8. At the sight of those astonishing truths what can we do but humble and annihilate ourselves before the Supreme Majesty. Yes, if we had committeed only a single mortal sin in our lives, we may be assured that we have done an evil which is infinitely greater than all possible creatures could remedy. It was only the humiliations and sufferings of a Man-God that were capable of making this satisfaction.

Would it not be enough to throw us into despair to consider that we have committed such sins, not to speak of the hundreds, the thousands, perhaps, that we have been guilty of; had we not the happiness of hoping in the mercy of our Heavenly Father, which surpasses all our malice? But we can count upon this mercy only in as far as we repent sincerely of our past sins, and as we practise a true penance.

This is the firm resolution that we ought to make as the practical conclusion of the extraordinary truths we have been considering. It is only as the result of this resolution that we shall find grace before the Lord, and the reward of true penitents.

SECOND SERMON: THE NECESSITY OF FAITH.

"And Jesus hearing this, marvelled, and said to them that followed Him, 'Amen, I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel."—Matt. viii., 10.

1. We may well believe that our Lord's admiration for the great faith and virtue of this Pagan ruler resulted in His conferring on him many graces. The denial of the necessity of faith, one of the great heresies of our age. Variations of Protestant thought! With the early reformers, faith was everything, and Catholic practice, nothing. With Protestants today, belief in Christian dogmas, unnecessary, and only the practice of benevolence towards the neighbor and natural uprightness required for salvation. As a consequence, all beliefs are equally good.

2. In opposition to those shifting tenets of Protestantism we hold that faith: i. e., submission of the mind and heart to the doctrines of a heaven-sent Teacher, is absolutely necessary. Without faith there is no religion; without faith there is no salvation.

3. This discourse designed to prove the first member of the statement. Religion, the true worship of the true God, not an arbitrary worship such as is offered by Protestants. This true worship of God cannot be without faith.

4. God has imposed the obligation of Faith on His servants in all times, as we see in the case of Adam, Abraham, Moses, the Jews, etc. All the great favors of our Lord on behalf of men worked as a consequence of their belief. It is His will that all religion take its origin in this fundamental virtue.

5. They greatly err then who would make all religion consist in Bible reading, acts of benevolence, moral uprightness, etc., while rejecting this first of the theological virtues. Appeal.

1. Profound, indeed, must have been the faith of this good Pagan!—a faith which called forth the admiration of Jesus Christ Himself. And great the virtue which drew so ready a response from the infinitely charitable Heart of the Saviour!

And who shall say what treasures of grace such a faith merited? Not only did he obtain the instant cure of his afflicted servant, but, we may well believe, his

after life was rewarded with a call to the true religion of Jesus Christ.

It is of the necessity of this faith that I desire to speak to you today. And I am the more desirous to do so, since the denial of the necessity of faith is one of the chief heresies of our age.

In studying the ever-shifting doctrines of Protestantism, nothing strikes one as more remarkable than the complete somersault Protestants have executed in regard to the dogma of the necessity of faith.

With Luther and the other early reformers faith was everything, and the ancient and venerable practices of the Catholic religion were as nothing. With them there was no need of prayer, or good works; there was no need of the Mass, or Confession, or fasting, or almsdeeds, in order to be saved. Faith ON the Redemption wrought by Jesus Christ took the place of all these. Nay, according to Luther and others, these were obstacles to salvation, rather than means thereto, inasmuch as they took away from the honor of the Redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ. And, hence, it was a maxim of Luther's, "Pecca fortiter." "Commit sin bravely;" "sin like a man;" "the more sin you commit, believing on the justification imputed to you through the merits of the Redeemer, the greater honor you give to the Man-God."

With Protestants of our days the very opposite doctrine is in vogue; and scarcely any of you that has had relations with Protestants but must have observed it. With them, faith; that is, belief in the dogmas of the Christian religion is quite unnecessary. It matters not, they say, what religion you profess; what doctrines you hold; what articles of belief you reject, even the most fundamental; as, the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity;

the Divinity of Jesus Christ; the doctrine of original sin; the eternity of the punishment of hell; the necessity of Baptism.

It matters not, they say, whether you believe or reject these truths, or others; provided you lead a respectable, inoffensive life, and practise benevolence towards your fellow men. Whether you be Protestant or Catholic; a member of the High Church or the Low Church; Episcopalian or Nonconformist: all these denominations are only so many branches of the one true Church, "so many roads leading to the same home."

2. Now, in opposition to those vague and shifting tenets of Protestantism, we hold inviolably that faith; that is, submission of the mind and heart to the doctrines of a heaven-sent Teacher, is absolutely necessary.

It is necessary both as a sacrifice and as a remedy. As a sacrifice, God demands it of us; and nothing can dispense us from it—as a remedy, God has attached to it our salvation; and nothing can supply for it to us. Or, to put it in two words: without faith, there is no religion; without faith, there is no salvation.

3. And, first of all, I say there can be no religion without faith. What is religion? Religion is, according to St. Augustine, "the true worship of the true God." In other words, "it is the true manner of serving Him in order to render ourselves worthy of Him, and to attain to a union with Him."

Now, without faith there can be no true worship of God—no true or useful manner of serving Him; and, hence, no means of rendering ourselves worthy of Him, or of attaining to a union with Him. For, it doesn't please God that we make our religion consist, as the Protestants do, in an arbitrary worship that we cull out

ourselves from the phantoms of our imagination, or the wanderings of our heart.

"Life eternal," says our Lord, i. e., as explained by St. Thomas, "the first beginning or entrance on the way that leads to life eternal, consists in knowing Thee, O my God, Who art the true and living God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent." Now, it is faith, and faith alone, that makes us know this living and true God, and Jesus Christ His only Son, the blessed Trinity being the most incomprehensible of all mysteries. It is in this faith and in the duties that it prescribes that true religion consists. God has imposed the obligation of it in all time. He has made of it the essence of the worship that is to be offered to Him. He has never dispensed anyone from it.

4. God has imposed the obligation of faith on His servants in all time. This I shall content myself to prove this evening.

Does He wish to raise Adam after his fall, and teach him the manner of becoming united to Him again when he had the misfortune of separating himself from Him by sin? He proposes to him a mystery to be believed by him, and the abridgment of all mysteries. He promises to him that "there should appear the Son of the Woman who would crush the serpent's head"—a mystery which from that time forward makes the abridgment of the religion of sinful man; the great object of his faith, the foundation of his hope, the principle of his salvation.

By promising to men a Saviour whose grace should be the remedy of all their maladies, He obliged them to believe and hope in Him. He wished that from that time man should believe what he did not see: that he should hope for what he did not deserve to receive,

but which God in His mercy wished to give him—that he should expect his salvation through a God hidden under the weakness of the Son of the Woman; and without this belief no one has been able to participate in the merits of the Saviour.

Does God wish in the lapse of time to contract an alliance with Abraham? It is by faith that He does so. He renews in his favor, and explains to him more definitely the ancient promise made to the first man, and the memory of which was so religiously observed in the family of the early patriarchs. He promises to him that he would have a son, and that "in his Seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed."

Abraham believes without hesitation; because God has spoken. He considers not that he is too old; that Sara, his wife, is sterile, and, moreover, beyond the age of conceiving. "He hoped against all hope," says St. Paul. He believed; and it was this faith that "was imputed to him unto justice."

Does God renew His alliance with the people of Israel by the ministry of Moses? He demands faith in the truth of His promises. It is the essential condition of that alliance. He Himself prescribes to them both what they must believe, and what they must do, in consequence of that belief.

The prodigies that He works in favor of his people are only "the figure and the shadow of those things that He prepares." The law that He gives them is only "the pedagogue," the guide which should lead them to the Messias. The sacrifices that He prescribes are only the figure of the Great Sacrifice which is to save the world. Moses himself is, in the household of God, only the faithful servant who is to prepare the world for the reception of His only Son. The end of his ministry is

to make known to the people of Israel the fact that God in later times will raise up in their midst "the Great Prophet" by excellence "Whom they should hear." "It was of Me that Moses wrote," says Our Lord; and it was He, in fact, Who was the true end of the entire law.

If the Son of God descends on the earth to save men; if He comes to establish the worship of the true God; it is by faith that He wishes we should become united to Him. It is to faith He attaches His favors and His graces. If He cures the paralytic; if He heals the servant of the centurian; if He allows Himself to be overcome by the holy importunities of the Canaanite woman; if He gives health to the woman with the issue of blood; if He remits the sins of the penitent: it is through the merits of faith that He accords these graces and those other spiritual ones of which they are the figure. "Believe," says He, "and all things are possible to you"—everything will be given you; He says to one: "Be it done to you according to your faith"; He says to another: The measure of the people's faith is the measure of the graces accorded them. "Do you believe," He asks of Martha. "Yes, Lord, I believe," she replies; and, behold enough to give life to one four days in the grave, and whose body was already beginning to emit the ordor of corruption. Thus you see that God imposed the obligation of faith in all times, and He has never dispensed anyone from the practice of it. It is His will that all religion take its origin in this fundamental virtue; and all other acts of religion, such as adoration, praise, thanksgiving, sacrifice, prayer, fasting, alms-deeds, be, as it were, its off-growths and productions. How great then the error of those who would make all religion consist of Bible

reading, prayer, acts of benevolence, and moral uprightness, while rejecting this first and fundamental one of the theological virtues!

5. Be convinced then of the necessity of faith as the primary act of religion; and be prepared at all times to submit your reason and judgment to its superior light; prize it as God's greatest gift to man; and, as was so happily enunciated by the fathers of the council of Trent, "the foundation and the root of all justice."

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE NECESSITY OF MORTIFYING OUR PASSIONS.

"And when He entered into a boat His disciples followed Him. And, behold, a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves; but He was asleep. And His disciples came to Him and awakened Him, saying: 'Lord, save us, we perish.' And Jesus saith to them: 'why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?' Then rising up He commanded the winds and the sea; and there came a great calm. But the men wondered, saying, what manner of Man is this; for, the winds and the sea obey Him?"—Matt. viii., 23-27.

Because of the Wounded Condition of Our Nature.

1. Introduction—In this incident our Lord is presented to us in Godlike guise, sleeping tranquilly amid the storm and showing Himself Master of the elements.

2. The tempests that swept down periodically over the Sea of Galilee a lively figure of the storms of passions that rise within us, and with no less disastrous results to our souls. We shall most certainly be lost if we awake not Jesus Christ slumbering in our hearts, by calling on Him with faith and confidence to have pity on us; and if He, touched with our prayers, do not command the furious elements of passion that rage within us to be calm.

3. The passions not of their nature evil, as believed by the Stöic philosophers, but only the motions of our sensitive appetite produced in us at the sight of sensible good or evil as shown us by the imagination. As such they are so many forces planted in us by God to help us in our operations.

4. Philisophers not agreed as to their number. St. Thomas gives them as eleven. Considered in themselves, they are good and necessary to us; but our nature being thrown out of its equilibrium by sin, the passions may carry us by their vehemence to excess and disaster. We must then mortify them and keep them under strict control.

Especially Those of Irregular Love and Desire.

1. This is true of all, but especially of two: irregular love and desire. Love and desire when drawn to the irregular indulgence of carnal pleasures have carried men to their worst excesses. Since the first fatal pleasure tasted by our first parents in eating

the forbidden fruit man feels a violent inclination for the indulgence of earthly gratifications, hence, "the corruption of all flesh" and the foul practices so often alluded to by the Apostle.

2. The same hateful vice rampant in the world today, and the cause of the hatred of God and religion so widespread among the inhabitants of the old world. "Women, wine and music," the watchword of the impious, and with those desires in their hearts, and with those words on their lips they try to "blot out the lights of heaven" for mankind. The impious said in his heart: "There is no God."

3. The evil perhaps less prevalent among us, and it is unlikely that it will raise up a religious persecution against us in our generation; but that it exists among us, and even in Catholics, is manifest, and this by many signs.

4. All this another reason urgently calling on us to mortify our passions, especially those two most dangerous ones.

The First Requirement of the Christian Law.

1. The same necessity enjoined by the clear teaching of Scripture. St. Paul was not content with exhorting the Colossians to lay aside their old vices; he would moreover have them mortify their passions which lead to those vices, and are the cause of them. In a famous passage he teaches that the lifelong occupation of a Christian consists in destroying in himself two things: the first is sin; the second, the passions that lead to sin. "Mortify your love of pleasure and evil desires."

2. This the point where many fail. They imagine that it is sufficient to avoid certain bad sins; but they overlook sinful thoughts and desires, and neglect to mortify the passions that lead to those sins. As a consequence, passion will be rekindled at the presence of the first dangerous object and will consume within them every vestige of virtue.

3. All this receives confirmation from the terrible words of Job xx., 21.

Comment on and application of those words leads to the conclusion that one of the greatest artifices of the devil to prevent the conversion of sinners is the sweet but false persuasion which he puts into their heads that it is enough in order to do away with their sins to confess them to a priest, and that there is no need to mortify their passions that were the cause of them.

4. Such mortification, however, the first requirement of the Christian law: "If anyone will come after Me; let him deny himself." And St. Paul: "Those that are Christ's have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences."

Because of the Wounded Condition of Our Nature.

1. In no incident of our Lord's life does He appear to us in more Godlike guise than in that narrated in this Gospel. Here He is presented to us, at one time sleeping tranquilly amid the storm; and again, standing on the prow of the sinking ship and commanding as a Master the winds and the sea; and "there came a great calm." And considering His divine tranquility on the occasion when all others were in a state of panic, and the power exercised by Him over the furious elements, we are made to share in the emotion of the disciples and wonderingly to inquire: "What manner of Man is this; for, the winds and the sea obey Him?"

2. "And behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves." Now, in reflecting on this passage of the Gospel I cannot but think that those tempests that swept down periodically over the little sea of Galilee are a lively figure of storms of another order, and ones that rage with no less disastrous results; I mean the storms of passion that rise up within us and threaten the eternal loss of our souls.

No, dearly beloved, the sea is not beaten with more furious storms than are our souls with passion; the winds which agitate it trouble not more impetuously its calm; the shipwrecks which there take place are neither more frequent nor more dangerous; the state of those who are thrown on its vast expanse without sail or rudder is not more perilous or more worthy of our pity than is that of so many who give themselves up to the violence of their passions. These shall most certainly be lost if they awake not Jesus Christ slumbering in their hearts by calling upon Him with a lively faith

and confidence to have pity on them; and if this adorable Saviour touched with their prayers, as He was with those of the Apostles do not command the winds and the sea; that is to say, the furious elements of passion that rage within them, to be calm.

3. This leads me to address you today on the necessity of mortifying our passions. And, now, that I may do so with effect, let me first of all tell you what the passions are, and what are their number and utility; for, indeed, many do not understand their nature, and even philosophers such as the Stöics of old to which school belonged the great Cicero have made mistakes about them, believing them to be by nature evil, when, of a truth, they are not.

The passions, then, are nothing more or less than the motions of our sensitive appetite which are produced in us at the sight of sensible good or evil as shown us by the imagination. As such they are so many forces planted in us by God to help us in our operations; just as the forces of nature, the wind, heat, steam, electricity, are given us by God to bring about results necessary or useful in the world of nature or of art.

4. Neither are philosophers agreed as to their number, some giving a greater number, some giving a smaller. But following St. Thomas, the master of them all, I say the passions are eleven; and they range themselves in two distinct categories. Some pertain to what may be called for want of a better term the desiderative appetite; and they are six, as love and hatred, desire and aversion, joy and sadness; and some to the irascible appetite; as hope and despair, fear and audacity, and anger, which has no opposite as the others.

The passions then considered in themselves and irrespective of our fallen condition are good and necessary

to us, and the gifts of an all-wise and bountiful God Who gifted us with them at our creation.

But this we are to take into consideration that our nature being wounded and thrown out of its equilibrium by sin, our lower appetites are liable to get out of the control of the governing powers of our soul, the mind and will; and the passions by their very vehemence may carry us to excess and disaster; just as the wind, one of the forces of nature, when it blows in moderation, brings about many useful results: it purifies the air, it tempers the heat of the sun, it carries with it a salutary moisture; but if it break out in storm it carries devastation far and wide, overthrows the works of man, and strews the coast with shipwreck and ruin. We must then mortify those passions, and keep them under strict control; even as the rider, with curb and bridle controls the fiery steed, and compels him, wayward, fierce, intractible though he be, to curb his fierce career and humbly do his bidding.

Especially those of irregular love and desire.

1. We must, I have said, mortify our passions and keep them under strict control. This is true of all, but especially of two: viz., love and desire; and those because they are more vehement than the rest, and because they are more liable to lead us astray by the irregularity of their objects. These passions of love and desire when drawn to the irregular indulgence of carnal and sensual pleasures have ever been the bane of virtue in man, and have carried him to the worst excesses. In fact, since that first fatal pleasure tasted by our first parents in eating the forbidden fruit, everything is unruly in our hearts. The slave of the flesh and of the

senses, we feel a violent inclination for the indulgence of earthly gratifications. The beauty of creatures is become a snare for us; and our passion allowed to have its way knows no other rule in their use than its entire satisfaction.

Such are we when left to ourselves and when we follow the inclination of nature. Hence, that "corruption of all flesh" of which Scripture speaks. Hence, the deluge of disorders that held sway in the ancient world. Hence, the special vice of Paganism, and those foul practices so often alluded to by the Apostle, and which he forbids to be named even among Christians, but which the corruption of that time made so common.

2. And can we say that that hateful vice is banished from the world in Christian times? Ah, my brethren, are we not reminded of the foul practices and vices indulged in even by people who are nominally Christians, and which are as a blot, I will not say on the civilization, but even on the Christianity of our day? What is the cause of the hatred of God and religion, and the war against everything Christian and holy that we see today among so large a number of the inhabitants of the Old World? It may be attributed to this cause or to that; but if it be traced to its source it will be found to be none other than the corruption of the heart consequent on the unbridled indulgence in impure love and desire that has taken possession of those peoples.

The prophet of old put the question: "Why do the nations rage, and the people devise vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes;" that is to say, the leaders of public opinion "met together against the Lord and against His Anointed One."

Their watchword is: "let us break their bonds asunder"—the holy shackles of the Commandments, and "let us cast their yoke away from us"—the light yoke of Christ's law, which really makes us free. And as was said with the approval and the applause of his audience by one of their orators on a recent occasion: "As for you, Christians, we leave to you the vain hope of the heaven to come; but for us, we intend to enjoy our heaven here. Give us here in abundance women, and wine, and music, and we are content to abide by the hell of the hereafter with which you threaten us." And with those sentiments in their hearts, and with those words on their lips, they rise up to make war against the Lord and His Church, and they try to blot out the very name of God from the vocabulary and even from their hearts. "The impious said in his heart: 'there is no God.'"

3. Thank God things have not come to such a pass with us, and it is unlikely that we shall witness religious persecution, at least in our generation, in this free country. But can we say that the same fell cause, the corruption of the heart and the loss of the religious sense consequent on the indulgence in impure love and desire, is not rife amongst us? Ah, my brethren, this is a matter I do not like to go into; but this I will say: Why is it we see so few of our mankind come to those altar rails to receive the Bread of Life; or, rather, why do we see so many men, young and old, who absent themselves, aye, for months and years from the Sacraments? Why so many who almost entirely neglect prayer? who miss Mass on Sundays? Why so many who show a general breakdown of religion in their lives? I admit there may be different causes; neglect, worldliness, and others; but can you say that the great

and general cause is not the corruption of morals and the apathy of soul resultant on the indulgence of carnal pleasures? Again, why so many plague spots in our cities, as is known to all, and the upkeep amongst us of so many houses of ill-fame, and of the thousands of immoral women who frequent them? Ah, my brethren, the cause is the same, the indulgence of the passions of impure love and desire. It behooves all, therefore, to mortify their passions and keep them under strict control, and especially those most dangerous ones of which I speak.

The first requirement of the Christian Law.

1. This necessity is enjoined by the clear teaching of Scripture. St. Paul was not content with exhorting the Colossians to lay aside the old vices which they gave themselves up to when in Paganism; he would, moreover, have them mortify their passions which lead to these vices, and are the cause and source of them. "But now," says he, "lay ye all away the sins in which you walked when you lived in them; anger, indignation, malice, blasphemy, filthy speech; mortify the members of the animal man that is within you; fornication, impurity, the love of pleasure, and bad desires." Pay attention to what the Apostle says here. He teaches that the occupation of a Christian in this life consists in destroying in himself two things: the first is sin. He must not be a rogue, or an impure man, or an angry person, or a blasphemer. "Lay aside all these," because a single one of them is capable of destroying you. It is better that you slay them with the sword of mortification, than that they should slay your soul by your indulging in them.

But is it sufficient to make war on the vices? No, we must moreover attack the passions that lead to them. "Mortify your love of pleasure and evil desires."

2. Now this is the point where many fail. They imagine that it is sufficient to avoid certain bad sins. "I am not," they will say, "a thief or a murderer;" but as to sinful thoughts and desires and the passions which lead to them, they easily overlook them. Is this to be truly converted? No, surely: you have left, my dear brother, the embers under the ashes. At the presence of the first dangerous object passion will be rekindled and will consume within you every vestige of virtue. You have cleansed the outside of the platter and of the cup; but you have left the inside dirty. The fever of your anger, of your sensuality, may have left you a little; but not having got rid of the evil germ it will return again, and you will fall more dangerously than before.

3. Hence the Holy Spirit speaking of the man who allows his passions to sway him, says that "the irregularities of his youth will penetrate to his bones, and will go down with him even to the tomb." — Job xx. 21. How terrible are these words, my brethren! I pray you then reflect on them a little.

There is a young man who, say, at the age of eighteen or twenty leads a soft, indulgent life, and who, carried away by his passions, runs like a wild horse wherever his caprice or love of pleasure urges him. This young man I allow goes occasionally to confession. But is he truly converted? No, surely. His passions fervid and unmortified become for him unfortunate mothers, who, fertile for his ruin, ever give birth to new sins. And the multitude of his vices becomes so great that his bones are filled with them. Sins of his

youth; sins of his mature years; sins of his old age; all these are insensibly multiplied; all these are heaped up one upon another. And as in order to extract the marrow from the bones it is necessary to break them; so, without an extraordinary grace of God nothing can make him quit his sins except the separation of his soul from his body by death. What do I say? "They will go down with him to the tomb," and follow him to hell. Whence I conclude that one of the greatest artifices of the devil to prevent the conversion of sinners is the sweet but false persuasion which he puts into their heads, that no matter what crimes they may have committed it is enough, in order to do away with them, to find a priest to whom they may confess them, and who is also found easy to give the absolution for them. It is thus that they perpetuate their disorders without putting themselves to the trouble of repressing their criminal passions or of destroying their bad habits.

4. Take in hand seriously then, the arduous work of mortifying your passions, and prosecute it unrelentingly throughout life. It is the first and most important requirement of the Christian law. And hence Christ, our Master has said: "If any one will come after Me, let him deny himself." And St. Paul, speaking in the name of Christ, said: and his words should sink into our hearts and remain there all our lives: "Those that are Christ's have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences." Those that are Christ's; that is to say, those who have a claim on Him, and who belong to Him; (not those who put on the mask of Christianity and who call out to Him, "Lord, Lord," but who preserve within them an uncircumcised and Pagan heart); those, I say, have crucified the flesh, exteriorly by salutary fasts and austerities; but they

have gone further and have moreover crucified themselves interiorly by the mortification of their vices and sinful passions; the vices, by extirpating them from their souls; and the passions, which generate the vices and enslave the flesh, by keeping them under strict control.

SECOND SERMON: NECESSITY OF FAITH.

1. Introduction—One religion not as good as another. False cry of the confounded peoples of today. The purpose of this discourse is to show what has been stated in my former instruction, viz., that it is in faith that God has made consist in all time the essence of the worship that is due to Him and that He demands. This is proved from St. Paul, who said: "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Faith is then the groundwork of religion, and God has made it the essence of the worship that is to be offered to Him.

2. By faith have the saints of the old law, as Abel, Enoch, etc., mentioned in Heb., chap. xi., merited the advantageous testimonies they receive there, etc.; amplification.

3. All those whom Christ has called to Himself He has called by faith. "Man is not justified except by the faith of Jesus Christ."—Gal. ii., 16.

4. Faith is not less necessary as a remedy and a condition than as a sacrifice. "He that believeth and is baptized," etc. Hence, it is called by the Council of Trent "the root and the seed of our justification and of all supernatural life."

5. Conclusion—We have a duty then to nourish and to foster within us this most necessary virtue of faith, and to avoid the occasions of sinning against it.

1. "One religion is as good as another." "They are all so many different roads leading to the same home." "There is no need of dogma in the teaching of religion." "If a man leads a clean, upright life, and does good to his neighbor, and practises honesty in his dealings, don't you think he is safe?" These are the great cry of the peoples of today. Confounded by the multiplicity of the teachings of the sects, wearied with their unceas-

ing wrangling over points of doctrine, not only the poor puzzled laity, but even the teachers of religion themselves, have at last taken refuge in this confession of helpless unbelief.

But, no, my brethren; it is a false cry and one that leads to utter loss and ruin. It cannot, therefore, be assented to by anyone who sincerely looks for the salvation to come.

When addressing you last Sunday on the necessity of faith I showed that God has imposed the obligation of it on the peoples in all times. On the same occasion I said that it was in faith and in a true and living faith that God had made consist in all time the essence of the worship that is due to Him and that He demands. This I purpose showing you today. And to this effect let me quote, first of all, the infallible authority of St. Paul: "Without it," says the great Apostle: "without faith it is impossible to please God."

Does not this show at a glance the absolute necessity of faith as the groundwork of religion and that God has made of it the essence of the worship that is to be offered to Him? It is by faith then that have pleased Him all that have ever had the happiness of pleasing Him. It is by it that the saints have merited the advantageous testimonies they received in holy Scripture, and especially in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

2. By what, in fact, did Abel offer to God a sacrifice so different to that of his brother Cain and so agreeable to the eyes of God? "It was by faith," says the great Apostle. "It was by faith that the just Enoch merited to be taken out of this world which was not worthy of him. It was by faith that Noah was made the inheritor of justice which he announced to an un-

believing world. It was by faith that Abraham quitted all at the first order of God; that he regarded himself as a stranger in the land that God had promised to him; that he regarded it only as a figure of a more excellent inheritance, of a city more stable, and of a happier native land. It was by it that he merited that God should speak to him and should be in truth his God. It was by faith that he offered to Him in sacrifice his only son and the hope of his old age; and it was this faith that made the merit of his sacrifice.

It was by faith that Moses preferred the sorrows and reproaches of Jesus Christ to all the riches of Egypt and all the delights of the court of Pharao. It was by faith that the Samsons, and the Jephthes, and the Davids, and all the other prophets pleased the Lord, and that they offered Him a worship worthy of Him. It was by faith that bad women even, and strangers, as Rahab and Ruth, merited to be admitted into the society of God's people, and to be made inheritors of His promises.

What more shall I say? for the time would fail me if I wished to follow in detail and bring before you all the saints and show you that it was by faith they became what they were; that it was by it they triumphed over kingdoms, accomplished justice, and obtained the effect of the promises.

"It is faith," says a Father of the Church, "that leads the neophite to grace by conducting him to Baptism. It is faith that justifies the believer; that restores to penitents the goods they had lost; that forms and perfects the just. It is faith that produces and preserves the purity of virgins, widows, and the married. It is faith that sanctifies ministers of the Lord.

It is it that prepares us for heaven and that makes us equal to the angels themselves."

Faith is then the soul of religion and piety; and without it there can be neither solid piety, nor true religion.

3. Moreover, God has never dispensed anyone from it. All those whom He has called to Him He has called by faith. It is faith that makes the true life of everyone that is truly just, Jew or Gentile, Greek or Barbarian, freeman or slave, man or woman, without distinction of condition or country, or sex. "Man," says the great Apostle, "is not justified except by the faith of Jesus Christ" (Gal. ii., 16). "Before God," he says again, "there is neither circumcision, or uncircumcision:" we belong to Him by faith only in as much as we become by faith new creatures.

What esteem then ought we not to have for the precious gift of faith, and for the ineffable grace which makes us true believers? What thanks do we not owe to God for this inestimable gift, and what care ought we not to take to preserve it, and make grow and flourish in us this precious seed of eternal life? There is then nothing more necessary than faith regarded as a sacrifice.

4. It is not less so as a remedy. Lest I weary you by elaborate arguments to prove this, let me only quote for you one passage from the Gospel.

When our Lord was sending His Apostles to apply the fruits of the Redemption through the medium of the Sacraments one condition He specified without which this great remedy could not be applied to our souls, and that condition was faith. "Go," says He, "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And

mark the words that follow: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but *he that believeth not* shall be condemned." Shall be condemned; because it is only through faith in Jesus Christ that the merits of the Redemption can be applied to our souls; and without it all the other means, such as prayer, the Sacraments, fasting, alms-deeds, and good works, can avail us nothing; because without it all these works are dead and cut off from the source of supernatural life that lies hidden in the fundamental virtue of faith which, for this reason, is called by the Council of Trent, "the root and the seed of our justification and of all supernatural life."

How greatly then do they err, and they are in our day a very numerous class, who make little of dogma in the teaching of religion, who say that one religion is as good as another, and that all that is required of us is to lead an inoffensive life and to practise justice and benevolence towards our neighbor.

5. Let it be your constant study, therefore, dear brethren, to nourish and foster within you this most necessary virtue of faith; and this you shall do by trustful prayer; by holy reading; by assiduous meditation on the truths of our holy religion; by frequent recitation of the Apostles' creed; and by repeated acts of the virtue itself which like every other habit grows, and is strengthened by practice. And take heed that you avoid the occasions of sinning against it, either by reading infidel or heretical works; or by frequenting the company of irreligious men and women; or by making bosom companions of members of false religions, or by intermarrying in their families; or, finally, by any other practice that may weaken or endanger within you the loss of this most precious and divine of God's gifts.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

FIRST SERMON: SCANDAL—AS IT AFFECTS GOD.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field; but while men were asleep his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way."—Matt. viii., 24-20.

I.

1. Introduction—Brief analysis of the text.

2. No subject more disagreeable to preach on, and this for two reasons: first, because of the hard things such a subject calls on the preacher to say, and second, because of the little effect he foresees his words will have on those to whom they are particularly applicable.

3. Definition of scandal—"A word, an act, or an omission, which gives occasion to the spiritual ruin of the neighbor." It is not necessary that the word, the act, or the omission be sinful in itself, or that it be intended to draw others to the commission of sin; it is sufficient that it have the appearance of evil, etc.

1. Scandal, in the first place, works a supreme injury on God. His own glory, the primary end of our creation. Our essential duty, then, to render to God at every instant of our lives a supreme worship. The scandal-giver withdraws his fellowman from rendering to God that worship; engages him in enmity and rebellion against Him. Amplification, and application.

II.

1. The scandal-giver overturns the merciful designs of Jesus Christ in regard to man. The cause of our Lord's becoming man was "to save us." This grand design occupied the Eternal Word from all eternity. It was to carry it out in time that He did all His great works.

2. The scandal-giver snatches from the Saviour the souls that have cost Him so much, in order to fling them back again to the devil. Phenomenal crime! A crime more cruel than that of the Jews who crucified our Blessed Lord! A crime more murderous than that of the greatest persecutors of the Christians!

3. Denunciation of scandal-givers—With St. John we will call them antichrists; for, in truth, they forestall the reign of antichrist on earth, and show themselves as hostile to our Lord as even he; with our blessed Lord we will denounce them as

"children of the devil," "the doers of his works," and "murderers of souls."

I.

1. The sower here spoken of is our blessed Lord Himself Who came on earth to sow the word of life in the hearts of men.

The enemy is the devil whose aim is to destroy this seed. The cockle is error, irreligion, immorality, heresy, oversown in the Church by the devil through the agency of scandal-givers; which in time produces its baneful crop, represented in the evil lives of those who are the victims of its influence.

The servants of the good man of the house are the avenging angels. His forbearance represents God's patience with evil-doers in this life. And, finally, the harvest is the time of death when He shall wreak vengeance on the wicked.

With this brief analysis of the text, I go on to speak to you today, dearly beloved, on the terrible subject of scandal.

2. And I begin by saying that there is no subject more disagreeable for a priest to preach on. And this for two reasons: first, because of the hard things such a subject calls on him to say; and second, because of the little effect he foresees his words will have upon those to whom they are particularly applicable.

Yes, "it must needs be," as says our Lord, "that scandals come." It must needs be, human society being constituted as it is of the good and the wicked, where the wicked far outbalance the good in numbers and audacity; it must needs be that scandals come; but yet, "Woe to that man by whom scandal cometh."

3. What, then, is scandal, which our blessed Lord

says must be always in the world, and which will bring such signal chastisement on those who are guilty of it? Well, scandal, in the sense I speak of, does not mean uncharitable gossip; neither does it mean what is commonly understood amongst certain classes as abusive language, language in which old sores are ripped open, and evil things are told of one's relatives. Scandal, as I would have you to understand, is defined by theologians to be "a word, or an act, which gives occasion to the spiritual ruin of the neighbor." It is a word spoken against religion or morality which poisons the minds and hearts of the hearers. For, "as the body is poisoned through the mouth," by means of what we eat or drink, "so the soul," says the greatest of philosophers, "is poisoned through the ears." It is an evil action which, being performed publicly, gives example to others in wrongdoing. It may also be an omission of duty, an omission which is calculated to bring about laxity amongst Christians.

And, at the outset, I would have you observe that in order to constitute scandal it is not necessary that the word, the act, or the omission, be sinful in itself, or that it be intended to draw others to the commission of sin. It is sufficient that it have the appearance of evil, and that from its circumstances it is calculated to work this evil effect on those who are witnesses of it. For, you must remember, dearly beloved, that we are essentially creatures of imitation, and that we are drawn most powerfully to the copying of the acts, the words and the whole conduct and lives of those amongst whom it is our lot in life to be thrown.

Such is scandal; and I say, first of all, that scandal works a supreme injury upon God, inasmuch as it withdraws His creatures from the allegiance they owe

to Him and to His laws. You all know the end God created us for, my brethren. His own glory was that end—that He might show forth in us His power, and wisdom, and goodness, and receive from us a perpetual homage of thanksgiving and praise. Our essential duty, then, must be to render to God every instant of our lives, a supreme worship of our hearts and wills.

Now, what does the scandal-giver, when by his criminal word, or act, or omission, he offers the occasion of spiritual ruin to his neighbor? He takes that fellow-being bound like himself by every title to render an incessant homage to his Creator, and withdraws him from His service, casts him into a state of sin, and engages him in enmity and rebellion against Him. Ah, brethren, if it be a shameful thing in a child to be indifferent to the respect due to a father; to see him without protest outraged in his honor and good name; if it be so great a crime to withdraw a man from the allegiance he owes his country; if the name of traitor is so hateful to all men; if the crime of Absalom, who raised the standard of revolt against his prince and father was so great and merited so signal a punishment; how hideous must that crime be which withdraws a man from the service of his Heavenly Father and Sovereign Lord, and engages him in open revolt against Him? And this is the crime the man commits who by his criminal word or act gives scandal to his neighbor. This is the crime you commit, my dear brother or sister, when, by cursing or swearing, you lead others to curse and swear likewise. This is the crime you are guilty of when, by quarreling or injustice you bring others into like sins. This is your crime, you who speak immodest words before the young and innocent, words which received into their impressionable minds

convey the poison of death to them, and become for them a leaven of corruption to their whole after lives. This is your crime, you, drunken fathers and mothers, who by your excesses give bad example to your children. This is your crime, you young men; aye, and you old men, too, who, by your unlawful interference with girls and women, would sully the purity of their souls. This is your crime all you who, by word, or act, or omission, are the cause of disedification to your neighbor. You deprive Almighty God of the worship which is His due; and you cause His subjects to turn traitors to Him, and enlist themselves in the ranks of His declared enemies.

II.

1. But the scandal-giver does greater injury to his God. He overturns the merciful designs of Jesus Christ in regard to man, and brings to naught the work of the Redemption.

Your know, dearly beloved, what was the cause of our Lord's coming down and taking flesh amongst us. "It was to save man," as it is sung in the Mass. "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was made Man."

This grand design of our salvation occupied the Son of God from all eternity. It was to carry it out that in time He took flesh, was born in a stable, lived a life of poverty and hardship, suffered hunger, and thirst, and affronts, and reproaches, and, finally, died on the cross. If He arose again, "It was for our justification," says the Apostle. If He ascended into heaven, it was "to prepare a place for us." If He instituted the Sacraments, it was to apply to our souls the graces purchased for us by His death. If He established the col-

lege of the Apostles, it was to spread throughout the earth His saving religion. If He constituted the order of the priesthood, it was to perpetuate His own benign mission among men, and to confer on generations to the remotest ages the blessings won for them by His combats and death. In a word, Christ God and Man in His entirety has been given for us to withdraw us from sin and to confer on us the privilege of the children of God.

2. But what is the work of the scandal-giver? He renders useless to the souls whom he perverts the Blood which Jesus Christ has shed for them. He destroys the merits of His blessed death. He snatches from the Saviour the souls that have cost Him so much, in order to fling them back again to the infernal enemy.

It is in vain, then, O charitable Shepherd of souls, that you have taken so much trouble in seeking the lost sheep. In vain have You fatigued yourself in running after her. In vain have You died in order to give her life. Your labors, Your tears, Your suffering, Your death, are all in vain. You have snatched her from the infernal wolf, only in order that the scandal-giver might take her again and hand her over, to his murderous keeping. O what a crime! It is yours, scandal-giver, a crime more cruel than that of the homicidal Jews. For, if they murdered the Lord of Glory, His death had this stupendous effect, at least, that it purchased for us Redemption; whereas, the Deicide which you commit, by crucifying Him again in the person of His children, only renders useless in their regard the merits of His Passion. A crime more murderous than that of the greatest persecutors of the Christian name. For, if they made war on the professors of the Christian religion; if they persecuted them; their efforts only

effected the salvation of innumerable martyrs, and spread the faith to the ends of the earth; whereas, the war carried on against souls by scandal-givers is so much the more dangerous to their salvation as it is the more insidious in its nature, and the more deadly in its effects.

3. What, then, shall he say of those persecutors who have made those days of peace to religion more bitter than the fiercest war? With St. John the Evangelist, we will call them antichrists. For, in truth, they forestall the reign of antichrist on earth, and show themselves as hostile to our Lord as even he. What will be the design and occupation of antichrist in the latter-times, as foretold by St. John?

It will be to destroy the Christian religion, and to seduce the souls for whom our Lord died. And this is your occupation, scandal-giver. You seduce souls by your evil words and example, and prepare the world for the reception of that great tyrant who is to make the last ages hideous by his presence.

I make a stronger denunciation against you, and I say, in the words of our Lord to the scandal-givers of His day: "You are the children of your father the devil, and you do his works." Now, what has been the employment of the devil from the beginning of the world until now? "He was a murderer," continues our Lord, "he was a murderer from the beginning." Yes, the daring enemy of God and man he has plied his evil work from the beginning. Filled with spite at seeing men created to fill the places lost by him and his rebel companions, he ceases not to tempt them to sin in order to draw them down to share his eternal ruin. The presumptious rival of the Man-God, he tries to defeat His merciful designs in man's favor. And, unhappily, he

has succeeded only too well in seducing souls. But sometimes of himself he cannot compass his designs from the resistance he meets with. What, then, does he do? Ah, my brethren, he employs scandal-givers, men and women, who, not content with committing sin themselves, try to draw others to be their accomplices in guilt. See, then, what are scandal-givers. They are the confederates of the devil who second his evil designs. They are the instruments serving him in his murderous work of conquering souls already staggered by his temptations. Say, then, is not scandal a hideous crime, since it takes from God the honor which is due to Him and overturns the merciful designs of Jesus Christ in our regard?

SECOND SERMON: SCANDAL AS IT AFFECTS THE SINNER HIMSELF.

I.

"Wo to the world because of scandals: For, it must needs be that scandals come; but nevertheless, wo to that man by whom the scandal cometh!"—Matt. xviii., 7.

1. Introduction—Recapitulation of the preceding sermon. Design of the present one.

2. Scandal differs from other classes of sin; just as, in the physical order, a plague differs from other classes of disease; and it must be treated accordingly. It is a moral pest, so much the more to be feared as it finds us already only too well disposed to contract it.

3. The scandal-giver leads his dupes into the most frightful state that the imagination can picture—into a state of spiritual death and rebellion against God. Appeal. It is not an enemy that the scandal-giver consigns to spiritual death—it is a dear and fast friend.

4. What renders this sin the more odious is that the consequences of it are irreparable, nay, they gather strength and become more pestiferous with the passage of time.

II.

1. It is a principle of eternal justice that sin must be punished as much as it deserves. And as there are special rewards for those who here on earth practise virtues of special merit; so, also we cannot doubt that special chastisements are inflicted in the next world on those who here withdraw others from giving God the honor which is due Him, and who pervert souls for whom our Lord gave His life—examples of those chastisements on scandal-givers not wanting in the Old Testament, as on Jeroboam, the sons of Heli, and others.

2. Far more terrible threats against scandal-givers by our Lord in the New Testament. Comment on the ominous word "wo", "it smacks of destruction", says St. Jerome.

3. Reflection on how little scandal-givers make of their sin. Those sins will turn up before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ Who will meet the scandal-giver "as the she-bear meets the hunters who have robbed her of her whelps."

4. Still hope of pardon for scandal-givers; but their repentance is a "miracle of miracles". Request for the charitable prayers of others for those master sinners. Counsel to the sinners themselves.

I.

1. Dearly beloved, we have once before treated of the fearful subject of scandal, and we have considered it specially as it affects Almighty God. We have seen that it works a supreme injury upon Him, inasmuch as it withdraws His creatures from the allegiance they owe Him, and brings to naught in their regard the work of the Redemption wrought by Jesus Christ.

Today we go on to consider the sin as it affects the scandal-giver himself. And, as we shall see, it works on him untold evils.

2. If I were to make a distinction between this sin and others, I would say it differs from them, just as in the physical order, an epidemic or a plague differs from other classes of disease. Let a man suffer from the most acute disorder; let him be harassed with the most grievous sores; his disease affects himself alone; and,

though he may give trouble to those about him, yet, he alone is the afflicted one. But, is he struck with the plague? is his malady contagious? then, it becomes a matter of public concern to have him removed from the society of others. His clothes, his house, his very breath, become so many vehicles for the propagation of his disease, which, unless arrested, may spread even to the destruction of the whole community.

And so with the malady of which I speak, it is a moral pest, so much the more to be feared, as it finds us already only too well disposed to contract it. How often does it happen that one immoral member ruins the spiritual life of the whole community? It needed only a Luther, or a Henry VIII to draw away some of the fairest provinces of Christendom from union with the Church. It needed only a Jeroboam to draw away ten out of the twelve tribes of Israel into idolatry. It needed only a Lucifer to draw away a third part of the angels and to transform them into devils. And, believe me, it needs only a few drunkards, a few immodest or irreligious men or women in a place like this, to draw away a great part of the youth to a life like their own.

3. And into what state will the scandal giver lead those who hearken to his lessons? O brethren, into the most frightful that the imagination can picture—into a state of spiritual death and rebellion against God—into a state which will expose them to the eternal death of hell.

O scandal-giver: O dearly beloved brother or sister; for, you are still a brother or sister in Christ, I appeal to you. Look into your conduct. See the evil you do. Have you an enemy? I would say to you, persecute him, if you will; calumniate him; burn his house; harass his wife and children; take your knife

and plunge it into his breast; blow out his brains. But, I appeal to you by the mercy of Jesus Christ; spare his soul. It is his only one; his real self; and it has before it an eternal destiny.

But, is it an enemy that the scandal-giver consigns thus to spiritual death? Not at all. It is a dear and fast friend. It is a bosom companion who has made him the depositary of all his secrets. It is an affectionate lover whom he seduces to content his passion. It is a beloved child whom God entrusted to him to rear up in His holy fear. And thus does the scandal-giver treat his nearest and dearest friends!

4. What renders this sin the more odious is that the consequences of it are irreparable. What will the scandal-giver do to repair his sin when the evil leaven he prepared has already corrupted the whole mass? What will he do when the sins he taught others become habitual with them, and when they in turn lead others into the same sins? What will he do when a whole countryside has become addicted to the evil of which he is the parent? What will he do when the souls whom he seduced call out from hell for vengeance on his head? What will he do when the sins he taught pass on to future ages, and become a kind of original sin to generations yet unborn? Do I exaggerate? Is it not a proverb, and one which experience daily verifies: "like father, like son?" Tell me, has the sin of Luther died with him? Does it not grow and gather strength, like the mountain torrent, as it passes down the valley of ages? Cannot we say, in fact, that scandal has been the dire cause of all the evils that desolate the Church today, and that the scandal-givers of the past, who now expiate their crimes in hell, still sin on earth in the persons of those whom they perverted?

II.

1. What then? Is it not a principle of eternal justice that sin must be punished as much as it deserves; and that as the good will be rewarded for every good act, even down to the charitable act of giving a cup of cold water to the thirsty traveler; so the wicked will receive their meed of punishment for every idle word spoken during their wicked life? Nay, as there are virtues of special merit, to the practice of which God has reserved more munificent rewards in the next life, such as are promised to those who have zeal for His glory and the salvation of souls; so, also, we cannot doubt that there are special chastisements for those who, here below, withdraw others from giving Him the honor which is His due, and who pervert souls for whom our Lord gave His life. And, just as our Lord has promised that those who advance His glory amongst men; who labor to extend His kingdom; who instruct the ignorant unto justice, shall shine as stars for all eternity; so, also, we may judge that those who labor to destroy the kingdom of Jesus Christ; who, instead of instructing the ignorant, spread darkness, and error, and lying, amongst men, will be reserved for special chastisements hereafter.

Examples of these chastisements on scandal-givers are not wanting in Scripture. Jeroboam, for instance, drew away ten of the twelve tribes of Israel from God's service and taught them to worship idols. And for this sin the race of Jeroboam, says the First Book of Kings (xiii., 33) "was destroyed and blotted out from the face of the earth." Again, the sons of Heli, the high priest, gave scandal to the people and prevented them from offering sacrifice in the temple; and for this sin

God rejected the whole family, and slew the evildoers. For, as He said to Samuel the prophet: "I have sworn to the house of Heli, that the iniquity of his house shall not be expiated by victims and offerings forever."

2. But those threats that are pronounced on individual scandal-givers in the Old Testament are repeated in a far more terrible manner against all scandal-givers in the New. Hear with fear and trembling those dreadful words, you who have by word or act given occasion to another's sin. There is surely nothing more terrible in all Scripture: "Wo to the world because of scandals. For it must needs be that scandals come; but, yet, wo to that man by whom the scandal cometh." "It were better for that man," says our Lord in another place, "that he had never been born." And again: "He that shall scandalize one of those little ones that believe in Me; it were better for him that a millstone were tied around his neck and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea." Upon which I wish to remark that that ominous word "wo" contains both a threat and a curse—a threat of divine vengeance which will pursue him in after life; and a curse of an outraged God Who declares that He will require the "Blood of Jesus Christ," shed for souls at the sinners' hands. "Wo," says St. Jerome, "smacks of destruction."

3. In reflecting on the conduct of different classes of people in the world, we cannot but think of how little those who give scandal to others make of their sin. They corrupt souls purchased by the Blood of Jesus Christ; and, after that, they eat, and drink, and laugh, and sleep, and take life as if nothing worthy of serious thought had happened.

Ah, but one day those sins will turn up again! It will be before the tribunal of the Eternal Judge—that

same Who declares that He will require the Blood He shed for souls at the sinners' hands. And what shall be His demeanor on the occasion? "I will meet them," He says, "as the she-bear meets the hunters who have robbed her of her whelps." God of Mercy, what an expression! "I will meet scandal-givers in judgment as the she-bear"—that most ferocious of wild beasts in the circumstances—"meets those who have robbed her of her whelps."

4. And is there any hope, then, for those who have rendered themselves guilty of this horrid sin; or, must they, alas, live on in despair? There is hope, dearly beloved, of making some reparation for the scandals of the past, and of yet obtaining mercy from God. Every sin that can be wept over can be pardoned. "A contrite and humble heart God will never despise." But to obtain the tears of repentance for the scandal-giver, this is a miracle of miracles.

Let us beg of God, dearly beloved, that the scandal-givers that are amongst us may obtain this most signal of mercies. And you, dearly beloved brother or sister, if your conscience tells you that you have been guilty of this sin, beg of God day and night for this grace of true repentance. Walk worthily hereafter, as becomes a true follower of Jesus Christ. Strive to repair as far as you can the evil of your past teaching and conduct. Pray to God daily for those whom you have drawn into sin. Quit not till death the way of humility and penance. It will conduct you still to the refuge of salvation.

THIRD SERMON: THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE—PANEGYRIC OF.

1. Introduction. The appearance of the risen Saviour to the Apostles a joyful and solemn event, but intended not merely to console them or to prove to them the reality of His Resurrection. He took the earliest opportunity after His Resurrection to institute this most necessary Sacrament on account of the importance to us of Penance. I purpose to treat periodically of this great subject.

2. The tenderness and merciful providence of our Saviour shown in its institution. Penance the great remedial sacrament of the New Law—called by the Council of Trent a "second Baptism." Its necessity to sinners.

3. Called also a "laborious Baptism." Injury done to God by sinners. Severity of the ancient Law to transgressors. Mercy of our Lord in the New. Analysis of text, showing proof of the divine power imparted to priests to forgive sins.

4. The greatness and dignity of the Sacrament made clear to us by the salutary effects produced in sinners by absolution, and the power and efficacy required to produce those effects.

5. The greatness of the boon conferred on us in Penance should fill us with gratitude, and that gratitude to be shown by a proper appreciation of, and a careful preparation for the reception of Penance.

1. It was a joyful and a solemn event the first appearance of the risen Saviour to the apostles gathered together in the Supper Chamber in Jerusalem. For three days they had led a hunted life, concealing themselves in an upper chamber: or if they appeared abroad, it was only by stealth and in disguise; and now the Master appears to them, the doors being shut, and hails them with His accustomed salutation.

But it was not merely to console His disciples, or to prove to them the reality of His Resurrection that Jesus made His appearance thus amongst them. Ever mindful of our needs, the Saviour took the earliest opportunity after His Resurrection, to enrich His

Church with one of the most necessary and important of the Sacraments, and to complete the powers of the priesthood in the apostles, by conferring on them the power of forgiving sin.

On account of the importance of this great subject I purpose to address you today, as I shall address you again at intervals during the coming season, on the Sacrament of Penance.

And I begin by quoting for you the passage of St. John relating to its institution:

"Now, when it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut where the Apostles were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them: 'Peace be to you. . . . As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you.' When He had said this He breathed on them; and He said to them: 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.' "—John xx., 19-23.

2. In no act of the Saviour's life, dearly beloved, did He show a more tender and merciful providence over us than in the institution of this holy Sacrament. He saw what poor, frail creatures we were; He saw the many temptations we would be exposed to from without and within; from the world, the flesh, and the devil. He saw the numbers of Christians who would unhappily fall into sin, notwithstanding the graces poured out on them, and He hastened to provide for them a remedy.

Penance is, then, the great remedial Sacrament of the New Law—the Sacrament by which we are restored to God's friendship after we had miserably forfeited it by the commission of mortal sin.

This Sacrament is called by the Council of Trent, "A second Baptism." And it is so, first, because it restores to us the gifts and privileges which Baptism had originally conferred on us, but which we subsequently lost through sin; and, secondly, because Christians who have fallen into sin have need of it like to that which all have of Baptism.

Now, Baptism is so necessary to every soul descended from Adam that he who, even without fault, has not received it, actually, or, at least, in implicit desire, can never, according to the announcement of our Lord Himself, enter into Heaven. Well, just so necessary is penance to all those who, after Baptism, have fallen into mortal sin. Unless they receive it actually or, at least, in implicit desire, they can never enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

3. The same Council adds that Penance is a "laborious Baptism." It is a second Baptism, as I have said, because it restores to us the lost gifts of that Sacrament. But it is a laborious, a painful Baptism, because through it, in sorrow and travail, we are restored to the precious graces with which that Sacrament had formerly enriched us.

In receiving Baptism you gave yourself to God; you contracted an alliance with Him; you became His child by adoption; the heir of all His goods. You were made a member of the mystic Body of the Saviour; you were made the temple of the Holy Ghost; you were enriched with wonderful gifts and privileges. You were—and as many times as I say "you were" so many arrows of grief and lively repentance should pierce your inmost soul. For, in committing sin you lost all those noble qualities. Through affection for a vile creature you broke the promises

you had made to God; you violated the alliance you had contracted with Him; you renounced the graces He had given you; you trampled under foot the Blood of the Testament, and saddened the Holy Ghost; you expelled Him from your heart in order to set up in it the idol of some gross pleasure. Is it not just that you should bear the penalty of your treachery and folly?

Pay attention to what I am going to quote from St. Paul on this subject. "In former times," says he, "when a man had transgressed against the law of Moses; and when two or three witnesses had deposed against him; he was condemned to death without hope of reprieve. Think ye not that they deserve greater punishment who trample under foot the Son of God; profane His Precious Blood; and work injury of His Divine Spirit?" And what punishment? Without doubt, eternal death and torture in that region where "everlasting horror and confusion dwells."

But our Lord, being mindful of our frailty, did not wish that the creature for whom He died should perish. He, therefore, instituted the Sacrament of Penance as a means by which we might be again restored to His friendship and the privileges we had before enjoyed. This He did on that memorable occasion I have quoted for you, when He appeared to the disciples and saluted them with words of peace. "Peace be to you," He said, "as the Father hath sent Me; so I send you." Now, we know that the Father sent His Son to earth with power to forgive sin. And this power the Saviour exercised on many well-known occasions. "Arise, thy sins are forgiven thee," he said to the Magdalen weeping at His feet. And, behold, she that had been a sinner and the scandal of Judea,

arose a saint, her heart filled with divine love, and higher in the estimation of God than he who had judged her in his heart a sinner! "That you may know that the Son of Man hath power to forgive sins" (He speaks to the Pharisees) "arise" (and He addresses the man sick of the palsy) "take up thy bed and go into thy house"; and immediately the sick man arose, being made whole of his infirmity. "Has any man condemned you?" said the Saviour to the woman taken in adultery. "No, Master," she said. "Neither will I condemn you." He said to her, standing shamefaced and contrite before Him. "Go, thou hast received My peace, and sin no more." "As the Father hath sent Me; so I send you." Therefore, in sending forth His disciples to carry out His mission on earth the Saviour invests them with the same power to forgive sin. "He breathed on them," and with the breath of the Man-God the Apostles inhale a new spirit and power. And even as at the creation the Almighty breathed into the face of the lifeless clay that was to form the body of Adam, and "man became a living soul"; so now at the quickening breath of the Saviour, the Apostles are endowed with a life-giving and cleansing power to restore life to those spiritually dead, and to cleanse souls defiled by the guilt of mortal sin. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained."

4. The greatness and dignity of this Sacrament will be made more clear to us if we consider the effects that are produced in the soul of him who receives it worthily, and the infinite power and efficacy required to produce those effects. For theologians tell us that the work of justification as much exceeds the

original act of creation, as the care and toil employed in the one exceeds that employed in the other. Now, at the Creation God merely gave the word of command, and all things sprang into existence. "He said, and they were done: He commanded, and they were made." But in order to bring about our justification, things are altogether different. Man sins; and that he may be again restored to grace the Son of God must come down from Heaven, assume our nature with all its infirmities, be born in a stable, lead a despised and mortified life, and finally die on the Cross.

And then the effects: what are they? The most astonishing that can be conceived. Through sin, as I have said, the ban of excommunication from God's sight is upon us, and we are doomed to the chastisement of hell. Our souls are the lurking places of devils. Our whole nature is infiltered and impregnated with the nastiness of guilt; and every power, and faculty, and element in us is cursed and blasted by the hatred of Almighty God. Well, into that soul, so cursed, so hated by God, the Sacrament of Penance restores again the life of grace and the Holy Spirit with His sevenfold gifts. Through it the devils are hunted back to the gates of doom, and man stands forth in all the dignity of regenerated sanctity. Again God looks with complacency on His child, now made whole of his infirmities, and restored to all his lost privileges and favors.

5. Dear brethren, how great is the boon conferred upon us in holy Penance! How grateful ought we to be to the Saviour for the institution of this holy Sacrament? Rightly did the prophet speak of it as one of the greatest of the blessings to be inau-

gurated by the coming of Christ amongst us. "For," says he, "a fountain is opened in the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for the washing of the sinner." And the saints and spiritual writers of all times have eulogised it as one of God's supreme gifts to man.

Holy David, filled with gratitude to God for His many graces and favors puts the question. "What shall I do to the Lord for all that He has done for me?" What return, dearly beloved, can we make to the Lord for the institution of this holy Sacrament? Well, there is one service that we can render Him, and one that He demands of us in the use of this Sacrament. "Holy things," He tells us, "are not to be given to the dogs; nor are pearls to be cast before swine." We are to treat the Sacrament of Penance, then, with all the respect and reverence it deserves. And that we may not like dogs trample on the Blood of Jesus Christ, nor like swine sacrilegiously devour the precious pearls of grace contained in this Sacrament, we must prepare to receive it worthily; by prayer, by self-examination, by sincere and heartfelt sorrow for our past sins, by a candid confession of them to Christ's minister, and by a humble acceptance of the penance he imposes on us, ever trusting that that God who mercifully commences in us through this Sacrament the work of our sanctification, will perfect it by granting us the crowning grace of final perseverance.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

FIRST SERMON: THE TRUE CHURCH—WHICH?

The following conference was delivered in mid-ocean, on board the great Atlantic liner, the *George Washington*. The audience was made up mainly of non-Catholics. It was afterwards delivered in the K.'s of C. Hall, Seattle, Washington, and elsewhere. The writer adapts it to the Gospel of today, as he judges that his brother priests will often have to treat of the same subject in the course of their pastoral labors.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field, which is the least indeed of all seeds. But when it is grown up it is greater than all herbs and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof."—Matt. xiii., 31-32.

1. Introduction—"The Kingdom of Heaven" in St. Matthew's Gospel usually refers to the Church; here, because of its phenomenal growth, in extent and power, it is likened to the mustard seed—because of the multitude of institutions in the Christian world today each claiming to be the Church, we in the following conference, examine the proofs which go to show which of them is in reality the true Church.

2. The ardent prayer of Christ at the Last Supper for unity among His disciples. Strange fact witnessed in the world today —Christianity split up into endless divisions, each believing contradictory doctrines and observing different religious practices; yet, all claiming to be the one true Church of Christ. Has the prayer of Christ then been unheard? Our Lord Himself testifies to the contrary.

3. Another solution of the phenomenon to be sought —of those divisions, one great body, and it by far the most numerous and influential of all, is found to be united amongst themselves and under their chief by the most absolute unity of belief and practice. If the origin of this difference of result is sought for, it will be found to be the different methods employed in the imparting or the acquiring of religious truth by those religious bodies the one the method of AUTHORITATIVE TEACHING BACKED UP BY A LIVING TRADITION; *the other, by the principle of* PRIVATE INTERPRETATION OF THE WRITTEN WORD.

4. A crucial point in our inquiry is: which of those methods is authorized by the Divine Founder of Christianity? The catch-cry of Protestants that "We are all journeying by different

roads to the same home," contains a disastrous fallacy, since Christ speaks of only one road, the thorny road of the Cross.

5. In examining this question we are confronted with some notable facts. First, Christ Himself never wrote a line of Scripture. Second, He never commanded His disciples to write a line of Scripture. Third, the treatises of the New Testament are fragmentary in character; put together unscientifically; were written a generation, some even two generations after the Ascension. Fourth, the Bible as we know it did not exist in the Church for 400 years. Fifth, in the time of Christ the world was for the most part illiterate. Sixth, the printing press was not invented till the fourteenth century. The Caxton exhibition at South Kensington, London, in 1878 "disproves the popular lie about Luther's finding the Bible for the first time at Erfurt, in 1507" (CHURCH TIMES, JULY 26, 1878). *Seventh, the method of private interpretation invented by Luther founded on a misconception of the Sacred text.*

6. The Catholic method of teaching religion, the only possible method then (or now); the one customary from the beginning of the world; but in commanding it Our Lord could not entrust the precious pearl of His Word to the fallible and unaided minds of men. When therefore He said to His apostles, "Go, teach all nations," He added, "and, behold, I am with you all days even to the end of the world". And again, "I will ask the Father and He will send upon you the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth, to teach you all truth, and to remain with you forever." These words shown to contain a manifest promise of INFALLIBILITY *to His Church.*

7. The culminating point of our inquiry: Do we see those fair promises of the Christ realized in the Catholic Church? and does the prayer of our Lord for unity among the members of His Church seem to be in her, and in her alone, fulfilled? Challenge to history and the scientific men of every age to show us in what that Church has departed a hair's breadth from the truth of the doctrine confided to her by our Lord, or has fallen for a moment into any shade of error. If this be so, can we not say that she is today, as she has always been, the one manifest creation and protegé of the Divine Founder. Gladstone's magnificent eulogy.

1. The kingdom of heaven, so often spoken of in St. Matthew's Gospel, usually refers to the Church of God on earth. Here, our Lord likens it, on account of its

phenomenal growth and power from weak beginnings, to the mustard seed.

Because of the multitude of institutions today claiming to be this Kingdom of Heaven, or the True Church of Jesus Christ, we here examine the proofs which go to show which of these is in reality the true and genuine Church of Jesus Christ and which are false ones. And this we do through the following line of argument:

2. In that sublime discourse pronounced by our Lord at the Last Supper He concluded with a fervent prayer to His Father for unity among His disciples and the members of His Church to the end of time. "My Father," He prayed, "I am about to die in accordance with Your will; but this, O Father, is My last dying request, that those whom Thou hast given Me and those who believe through them may be one as We also are One. And as We, O Father, are One in substance, so that You are in Me, and I in You; so, I will that they be one in You, and in Me, and among one another."

Now, in looking over the Christian world today in the light of this prayer, we come across a strange fact: and it is, that Christianity seems split up into a thousand schools or sects, each believing different, and, in many cases, diametrically opposite doctrines, and observing different religious practices; and, yet, all claiming to be the one true Church of Christ.

What then? Has the prayer of our Lord been unheard? and have His dying aspirations proved vain? No, my friends, the prayers of the Christ are always heard by His Eternal Father, as the Saviour Himself testifies.

While standing by the open grave of Lazarus, as we are told, Jesus, lifting up His eyes, said: "Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me, and I know

that Thou hearest Me always." And we are to believe that He was heard in this case also; and we must look for another solution of the apparent difficulty.

3. In examining more closely these divisions we find that they coalesce into two or three greater bodies or families.

Of those families, one is divided into endless smaller sects differing from the others and among themselves by the most vital and far-reaching differences; another, the largest, and, shall I say, the most influential of those bodies, is united among themselves and under their chief by the most absolute unity of belief and practice.

And if you inquire further into the origin and source of this difference in constitution and belief, you will find that it comes from the different methods employed in the imparting, or in the acquiring religious truth by those religious bodies—the one, the method of authoritative teaching backed up by a living tradition; as is attested by a luminous history of 1,900 years—the others all, however they may differ among themselves, or from the former, by the principle of *private interpretation of the written Word*. These different principles being adopted by the one or the other body, it is no wonder that they differ in numberless points of doctrine and practice. It is no wonder, moreover, that the one body is entirely united, and that the other is divided into a thousand sects or sub-families.

4. Now I come to a crucial point in our inquiry and ask, which body of Christians—the Catholic, or the non-Catholic, which takes in, as I have said, all the sects: which body is right and which is wrong, for both cannot be right, in its method of propounding or acquiring a knowledge of the religion of Christ? Which is the

principle of authoritative teaching, assisted by the living tradition, as employed by the Catholic Church since her institution by the Apostles 1900 years ago; or the principle of private interpretation of the written Word, invented by Luther; which, I ask, is the one authorized by Christ, its Founder?

It won't do to answer, as is commonly done, by saying that we are all journeying by different roads to the same home. That is only a catch cry invented in modern times—in very modern times—to cover over an insoluble difference of opinion. It is only a catch cry, I say, and like many catch cries, it contains a disastrous fallacy.

Christ, the Founder, speaks of only one road—a straight one—rough and thorny, and which is entered by a narrow gate. It was the one He Himself traveled, the one He invites us to follow Him on. "If any one will come after Me, let him lead a life of self-denial; and bear patiently the crosses he meets in life; and so follow Me by the practice of the Christian virtues."

True, He speaks of another road, a great one, broad and smooth, and which is entered by a wide gate. It is the road of self indulgence, and where the journeyers who are in throngs believe what they like, and do what they like, make pick and choice in matters of belief, and are unto themselves a law; and so constitute an anarchy. Our Lord quite truly speaks of this thoroughfare, but not as leading to the home.

But let us face boldly the question Which of the Christian bodies is right and which is wrong in its method of imparting or of acquiring religious truths?

5. In examining this question we are confronted with some notable facts.

(1) Christ Himself never wrote a line of Scripture.

(2) He never commanded His disciples to write a line of Scripture; what He did command His disciples to do was to preach and teach, "Go, teach all nations." "Preach the Gospel to every creature."

(3) If you inquire into the circumstances in which the chief part of the New Testament, in which we are principally interested, was written; you will find that it, the written Testament, was an after-thought, as it were, in the make-up of Christianity; that its treatises are in good part fragmentary in character; put together unscientifically, and without technical order, as the conditions of the churches to which they were addressed demanded; that some of the most important of these treatises were not written for a great many years after the Ascension. Thus, the Gospel of St. Luke was not written till 24 years after that great event. The Acts of the Apostles ends in the year 63. Some of the Epistles, and those the more important ones, were penned from 20 to 25 years that is to say, a whole generation after the ascension. And the very important treatises, the Apocalypse and the Gospel of St. John, only from sixty-three to sixty-four years after our Lord's ascension.

(4) The Bible as we know it today, compiled into a single book, did not exist in the Church for nearly four hundred years. Thus we see that many generations of Christians lived their lives and were sanctified before even there was a Bible. The whole Bible, as we know it, was received for the first time by the pastors of the Church in the councils of Hyppo in Africa, A. D. 393, and of Carthage, A. D. 397. For you must take into account the circumstances of those early days. Communication was not by wireless, or telephone, as in our time.

When St. Paul, for instance, wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians, he sent it by special messengers on the coasting vessels along the towns of Greece and Epirus to the pastors of this Church, and it was instantly received with the respect it merited as a Divine work. After a time it was copied by the pastors of the neighboring churches of Asia. But not for long years, perhaps decades, was it recognized as authentic by the remote churches of Gaul, or Spain, or Africa, and so of the others.

Moreover, there was need of great caution in those days, for the churches were crowded with apocryphal gospels and epistles written in good part by the heretics who swarmed in the Church from the beginning.

(5) The Protestant method of private interpretation was simply impossible in the time of Christ and for many centuries after; and Christ as a practical Teacher chose the sole method possible and practicable. For, you must remember, that in the time of our Lord the world was in great part illiterate.

(6) You are to remember, furthermore, that the printing press was invented only in the fourteenth century. To write a Bible then would be a labor of many years; and when it was finished it was full of mistakes of every kind.

To copy and disseminate the Bible was the achievement chiefly of the "lazy monks" of the "dark" or middle ages, a herculean work for which we can never be grateful enough to them; and it is concerning those days that the calumny is levelled of the Church's having chained the Bible. Yes, the Bible was chained in those days, just as — can we say it any longer—in those times of sanitary fads? we chain the drinking cup at the village pump, so that it might be of advantage to all. A

parish, for instance, was ambitious to be the possessor of a Bible. It was purchased by public subscription at the cost of several thousand dollars and then it was placed in a conspicuous position in the church, chained to the stand on which it rested to be read by anyone who desired it. Under these conditions it is plain to see that the Protestant method of private interpretation was impossible for fifteen hundred years of Christian history.

But once the printing press was invented, editions of the sacred writings began to be multiplied; and it is a silly story of the Protestants that Luther "discovered" the Latin Bible; and that he was the first to translate it into German. As the Protestant *Church Times,* published in London, July 26, 1878, says: "The catalogue (of Bibles in the Caxton Exposition at South Kensington, 1878,) will be very useful for one thing at any rate as *disproving the popular lie about Luther finding the Bible* for the first time at Erfurt, about 1507. Not only were there many editions of the Latin Vulgate (i. e., the Bible in Latin, the very thing Luther is pretended to have discovered); but there were actually *nine German editions of the Bible* in the Caxton Exhibition earlier than 1483, the year of Luther's birth. There were twenty-seven editions in German alone before Luther's Bible appeared."

And, lastly, the method of private interpretation is founded on a misconception of the sacred text. "Search the Scriptures," cried Luther, quoting our Lord's answer to the Pharisees; when the context, as well as the Greek verb employed, suggests the translation by the indicative—"you search the Scriptures;" and, even so, it relies for sanction on this single text alone.

6. I go now to examine the Catholic method in the

teaching of religion. It was the only possible method, I claim, considering the circumstances of the time (I might add, had I time to go into the proofs of it, that it is so still), the one customary in the teaching of religious truth from the beginning of the world. It was so, not only in the times anterior to Moses and before the Old Testament was written, but even in Jewish times down to that of our Lord. As it is said in the prophet Malachias: "The lips of the priest shall speak wisdom, and the people shall seek the law *at his mouth.*"

But in commanding the oral and authoritative method of teaching His religion our Lord could not entrust the precious pearl of His Word to the fallible and unaided minds of men. Every human institution bears in itself the seeds of corruption and decay; and everything brought to light as the result of human endeavor is perishable and suffers from the corroding action of time.

It is not so with the works of God. They are imperishable, fire tried, witnesses to His own unending existence.

This is especially the case with His masterpiece and spouse, the Church. She, the beloved of the Spouse, must be "all fair."

The Bride of Christ is to be "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." "without spot" of dishonor to mantle over her fair cheek; "without wrinkle" of old age or decreptitude to furrow her noble brow; "or any such thing," as suggests human fallibility or decay.

He would not, therefore, entrust her government in her great career to the fallible guidance of man. When, therefore, He said to the Apostles, "Go and teach all nations;" He added, "and behold I am with you all days, even to the end of time." I am in the midst of you

to govern and direct you throughout the ages, and to protect you amid the trials and storms to come; even as formerly I was with you to allay the angry elements on the stormy Sea of Galilee.

He said again: "I will send upon you the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, to teach you all truth, and to remain with you forever."

If then Christ promised to be with the Church "all days, even to the end of time;" if the Holy Spirit is to descend upon her and remain with her "forever;" I ask, can that Church fail in her mission of imparting His truth to mankind and fall into error? And is it, or, is it not, a blasphemy and a calumny to suggest such a possibility? That Church was to be "the pillar and the ground of truth," according to the Apostle—the pillar, which sustained the whole edifice; nay, the very foundation in which truth should rest for all time. Could that pillar crumble under stress of trial; and could that foundation in time give way?

7. I come now to the culminating point of our inquiry. Do we see those fair promises of the Christ realized in the Catholic Church? And does the earnest prayer of our Lord for unity among the members of His Church seem to be in her, and in her, alone, fulfilled?

Now, I am going to make a bold challenge; and I trust, my friends, that in making it none of you will judge me guilty of arrogance or any other sentiment than that of the most beneficent and charitable zeal. That Church has been before the world for the last 1,900 years, she has passed through every vicissitude of martyrdom and glory. She has felt the pulse of humanity in all its phases from the state of utmost barbarism to the most advanced stage of civilization. She has been tried as it were by fire.

We are today three hundred millions of souls united as one man in faith, in obedience to our Supreme Head, in doctrine, in practice, in Sacraments, in Sacrifice, and in charity. Does it not seem that we have grown from the mustard seed to the great institution we are today? Has the exalted prayer of our Lord for unity among His disciples been realized in us? And have not Christ's promises been in us fulfilled? That Church has been, as I have said, before the world in the most public manner for the last 1,900 years. She has passed through every vicissitude of humiliation and glory; she has been tried in every manner.

We now challenge history and the scientific men of every age to show us in what that Church has departed a hair's breadth from the truth of the doctrine confided to her by our Lord, or has fallen for once or for a moment into any shade of error. Understand me well, my friends, I am aware that she has been often accused by her enemies of having lapsed on many occasions into error, and as the English *Sacramentary* has it, of having been "steeped in damnable idolatry for a thousand years or more." But, as you know, my friends, it is one thing to make a malicious accusation against an institution; it is another thing to prove that accusation and to bring home conviction to the accused.

And if this be so, can we not say that she is today, as she has always been, among all those religions that pretend to come from Christ, "the city seated on the mountain top that cannot be hid;" "the mountain seated on the top of mountains," the one manifest creation and protegé of the Divine Founder?

And was it not with justice then that that great thinker and statesman, the late Mr. Gladstone, himself a Protes-

tant, said of her: "The Catholic Church has for the last 1,500 years marched at the head of civilization and has harnessed to her chariot as the horses of a triumphal car the chief intellectual and material forces of the world. Her art, the art of the world. Her genius, the genius of the world. Her greatness, glory, grandeur and magnificence, have been almost, though not absolutely, all that in this respect, the world has had to boast of. Her children are more numerous than all the children of the sects combined, and she every day extends the boundaries of her vast empire. Her altars are raised in every clime, and her missionaries are found wherever the evangel of eternity is to be preached and souls to be saved.

"And this wondrous Church which is as old as Christianity, and as universal as mankind, shows no signs of decay. Rather is she as fresh, and as vigorous, and as fruitful as the day when the Pentecostal fires were showered on the earth."

SECOND SERMON: PENANCE—PARTS OF.

1. The necessity of the Sacrament of Penance to sinners absolute, therefore the duty incumbent on us of knowing how to employ it rightly. The Sacrament made up of four acts—contrition, confession, satisfaction and absolution. Why called integral parts, and why, essential parts?

2. Contrition, description of, and why so necessary, and the ground work of the Sacrament?

3. Confession, definition of. Why fitting that confession should constitute one of the parts of penance?

4. Absolution. Why so consoling to the penitent?

5. Satisfaction. Why necessary? What is remitted to the penitent by absolution?

6. How those parts may be looked on as the MATTER AND FORM *of the Sacrament. Illustrations, and why they are called*

essential parts? Source of distinctions between null and void confessions and sacrilegious confessions.

7. Conclusion, appeal.

1. In my former instruction on the Sacrament of Penance I treated of its institution, of its effects, and of its necessity. That necessity is absolute for all Christians who have fallen into mortal sin, and within whose power it is to receive it.

Now, this being so, it is incumbent on us to know how to employ rightly so salutary a means of justification. And, first of all let me lay down that the Sacrament of Penance is made up of four acts which are called in the language of theology, now, the essential, now, the integral parts of Penance. These acts are: Contrition, Confession, Satisfaction, Absolution. They are called integral parts, because united they make up the whole Sacrament; and essential, because if any of them be wanting, the Sacrament is thereby made null and void; in other words, no Sacramental effect takes place in the soul.

Now to come to the nature of each of those parts separately.

2. Contrition, which is the first in the order of nature, as it generally is also in that of time, is a turning away from sin, together with a conversion of the heart to God by love. This turning away from sin; this conversion to God by sincere repentance were in all ages necessary for the blotting out of sin. It was even necessary in a far more perfect form than is required in the Sacrament of Penance. Contrition was always necessary, I say, and the reason is at once obvious. For the perfection of God and the deformity of sin are so opposed to each other that it is impossible for affection for the one and the other to remain in the soul at the

same time. This, then, is the beginning of our justification; the ground work of the Sacrament of Penance; without which, even independently of the appointment of God, no justification can take place in the soul.

3. The second part of Penance is Confession. This is a sorrowful declaration of our sins to a priest appointed by the Church. And it was a merciful appointment of our Lord, the ordaining this practice in order to the remission of sins. For, the making known of our faults to others is an outlet that nature seeks to the pent-up feelings of grief and remorse consequent on their commission. And hence relief is sought for and obtained in sorrow and remorse by the manifestation of the causes of that grief and remorse to others. It was fitting, then, that Confession should constitute one of the parts of Penance. But Confession is not necessary as a means of justification in the same sense as Contrition is. Our Lord, had he so willed, might have appointed other means than Confession for the obtaining of forgiveness for personal sins. He might, for instance, have raised Contrition, together with the general acknowledgment of sin, such as obtained among the Jews to the dignity of a Sacrament; just as He did in the case of Matrimony, where He gave sanction to the natural contract of marriage and constituted it a Sacrament, with power to confer Sacramental grace. But He did not will to do so, and hence Confession takes its places as the second part of Penance.

4. The third part is Absolution. This is a most consoling appointment of our Lord, and one that shows us the tenderness of His government of us Christians as compared with His government of the Israelites of old. Formerly, when a man had fallen into sin, though he performed the most heartfelt acts of sorrow for that

sin; though he performed the most heroic penances in atonement for it; yet God had given him no sign by which to know that it had been forgiven him. But in the New Law our Lord has chosen one like ourselves, a man with human sympathies and infirmities, and has vested him with authority to forgive sins in His name. This is clearly proved to us by the words of the Saviour to His disciples in the text that I have quoted for you in the beginning: "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven." When, therefore, after a sorrowful confession of your sins you hear the words of Absolution pronounced over you: "By the authority committed to me I absolve you from your sins," you are as assured that your sins are forgiven you as if you had heard the Almigthy Himself pronounce over you the sentence of pardon.

5. The last part of Penance is Satisfaction. When an injury has been done by one man to another, justice demands that amends be made to the injured party; and this, because the inequality brought about by the wrong done cannot be made good, save by a thorough restoration to the injured one of the rights he has been deprived of. And so with God. By mortal sin an infinite injury has been done Him –an injury so great that eternal fires cannot atone for. By Absolution, I have said, the guilt and eternal punishment due for such sin are mercifully remitted; but there still remains a temporal punishment to be undergone as a reparation of the honor due to God, which punishment is in proportion to the malice of our sin on the one hand, and the weakness of our repentance on the other; and this punishment is cancelled, at least in part, by the fulfilment of the penance imposed by the priest, who is appointed by God judge over the souls of his penitents.

The humble acceptance of Penance, and the diligent performance of it, constitute Satisfaction.

6. These are then the parts that go to make up the Sacrament of Penance; and without them no Sacramental effect can take place in the soul. But they may be looked on in another and still more important light, and one that gives us a clearer insight into the nature and working of Penance; namely, as the *matter* and *form* of the Sacrament. The introduction of these two terms, *matter* and *form*, necessitates a little illustration.

Well, then, every Sacrament is a sensible sign appointed by Jesus Christ to give grace. This sign is twofold—the matter, and the form. The matter of a Sacrament is some sensible thing having power by the appointment of Christ to produce grace in the soul; and the form is a certain arrangement of words determining and giving effect to the matter. Thus, in Baptism the matter; that is, the sensible thing having power to produce grace, is water; and the form, the element that determines and gives effect to the matter, are the words of the minister of the Sacrament. In the Eucharist, the matter are the bread and wine; and the form, the words of Consecration. So, also, in Penance, the matter are the acts of the penitent; or, rather, the sins to be forgiven as made sensible by the acts of the penitent; namely, by Contrition, by a sorrowful Confession of them, and by a humble acceptance of the penance imposed by the priest, or Satisfaction; and the form, the words of Absolution.

Now, why do I take such pains in making this distinction? I have an important object in view. I want to bring home conviction to you of the necessity of earnestness in the preparation for the reception of Penance. For, the matter and form of each Sacrament having

been appointed by our Lord; if anything essential be wanting to either; the Sacrament is made null and void. Thus with regard to Baptism, if the element that is poured on the head of the person that is being Baptised be not water, but some other liquid; no Sacramental effect takes place. So, also, if the words pronounced by the priest in Baptism be not substantially correct.

Again, with regard to the Eucharist, if there be not bread and wine present, but some other elements; or if the words of Consecration spoken by the priest be not substantially correct; no Sacramental effect takes place; no Sacrifice is offered. And so with regard to Penance which I am discussing. If there be anything substantially defective in the matter; that is, in the contrition of the penitent; in his confession; or in his will to accept the penance imposed; no Sacramental effect takes place: the Sacrament is null and void. Moreover, herein lies the distinction between null and void confessions and sacrilegious ones. For, if willfully, or through culpable negligence anything essential be wanting to the contrition or the confession: the Sacrament is not only null and void, but, also, sacrilegious; whereas, if the defect occurs without deliberation or culpable negligence: it is null, but not sacrilegious.

I would have you, my friends, mark this distinction well: for, in it lies the whole importance of this instruction. If when coming to Confession the penitent have not true Contrition; or if he conceal a mortal sin from the confessor; or if he only half tell it; or if he do not make known the number of times he committed the sin as well as it is in his power to make it known; or if through culpable negligence in the preparation, he do not know his sins and if he fail, consequently, in confessing them; then, I say, the matter of the Sacrament is

not presented by him; an essential thing is wanting, and the confession is not only null, but sacrilegious also.

7. Dear brethren, these are most important truths and ought to be known well by you. For it is the ignorance of those things or the contemning of them, more than anything else, that fills the Church with sacrilegious Christians; crowds hell with reprobates; and brings universal ruin on the earth. Let it be, then, your earnest study to prepare to receive well the Sacrament of Penance. Let nothing essential be wanting to your Contrition; let your Confession be a clear, upright manifestation of your conscience, as far as you can, after a careful examination of yourself, manifest it. Be animated with a sincere desire of satisfying God's justice outraged by your sins. Receive submissively the penance imposed on you by your confessor, and try to perform it with exactness and promptitude. Then may you expect with full confidence that the Absolution pronounced over you will remit your past sins; restore you to the friendship of God; and grant you a sweet peace of soul, the most delightful heritage of God's chosen children.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

FIRST SERMON: THE OBLIGATION OF LABOR.

"Why stand ye here all the day idle?"—Matt. xx., 6.

I.

1. Introduction—In this discourse I address myself not to habitual idlers, worthless souls; but rather to men and women who take life seriously. Those too often give way to murmuring and complaints, and they thus lose the supernatural reward work merits when gone through with a right intention.

2. Work, in the first place, an obligation attached to the condition of our being. When God placed our first parents in Paradise He gave them two precepts: First, "not to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; second, to work. This condition of our being has been recognized by the human race at all times. Hence, the enactment of laws compelling labor by the most famous peoples of antiquity, as the Egyptians, the Greeks, etc.

3. How unworthy, therefore, the conduct and maxims of many Christians; how reprehensible their sentiments, who think themselves disgraced by being obliged to labor; and how dishonorable the lives of idlers! Idleness a sin that merits hell; as we learn from the parable, that the servant who buried his talent in the sand was delivered to the torturers; and from Job, who says that "man is born to labor even as the bird is born to fly".

II.

1. We are bound to labor, in the second place, as a penalty of sin—"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread all the days of thy life." This sentence, according to St. Thomas, contains a commandment which obliges all men to some honest labor of body or mind.

2. Analysis of scripture text, and application to different classes.

III.

1. Lastly, as Christians we are bound to labor; since, in this quality we ought to imitate Jesus Christ, our Head—He "was inured to labor from His youth". In His private life He labored as a carpenter, in His public life He often "had not time to eat bread". His Apostles were all hardy workmen capable of fatigue

and labor—example of St. Paul, who practised manual labor even when preaching the Gospel.

2. St. Paul makes labor a precept. "We entreat you, brethren, that you do your own business, and work with your own hands, as we have COMMANDED *you."—I. Thes. iv., 2. And again: "If any will not work; neither let him eat."*

3. Conclusion—The dignity of labor, and the honor due to the workman. Appeal, to subject ourselves to work in a spirit of submission to the will of God, who ordains labor as our lot in life, whether as men, as penitents, or as Christians, that from natural works they become supernatural ones, and become meritorious of eternal life.

Is a duty attached to the condition of our being.

1. Without entering into the explanation of this parable the spiritual sense of which has been often explained to you, I desire to make some remarks to you on the precept of labor which this reproof of our blessed Lord to the idlers in the market place alludes to and presupposes. And in doing so, I address myself, not to habitual idlers, some of whom are to be found about every town, men and women "born to eat," to use the words of the poet, who are the pest of family life and the bane of religion. These I consider it a loss of time in a priest to speak to; since they are beings without honor, without soul, without conscience, devoid of every vestige of solid natural virtue which alone constitutes the basis of the supernatural life.

I address myself rather to men and women who take life seriously—Christians who make an effort to discharge their religious and social duties; but who unhappily only too often give way to murmurings and complaints in the midst of their work, and who thus lose the supernatural reward work merits when gone through with the dispositions which ennoble and sanctify it.

2. Permit me then to say, in the first place, that to work is an obligation attached to the condition of our being. When Almighty God placed our first parents in Paradise besides the precept which He gave them of abstaining from the fruit of the tree of knowledge, there was another, and it was that they should work. "And the Lord God," says the book of *Genesis*, "took man and placed him in the Paradise of pleasure to dress it and keep it." Here we see that though Adam was vested with wondrous gifts of body and soul, and though he was still living in original innocence; yet the Almighty subjected him to manual labor—"He placed him in the Paradise of pleasure to dress it and keep it."

It is true that bodily labor to our first parents in the state of innocence was an agreeable diversion rather than a painful and humiliating muscular exercise; but still, to labor was man's condition from the beginning, and only by subjecting himself to it could Adam persevere in grace, even before his fall.

This condition of our being has been recognized by the human race in all times; and we see the most famous peoples of antiquity hold the laborer in honor and treat idleness as a crime.

Among the Egyptians every subject was obliged to give an account of the work done by him during the course of the year to the overseer of his district. And if he could not give a satisfactory account of the employment of his time he was expelled from the country to which he was forbidden to return under penalty of death. And so important did the Greeks consider the obligation to work that, though their laws compelled children to support their parents, when they grew incapable, or fell into want; yet they allowed one exception, and that was with regard to those parents who

neglected to give a trade to their children in youth. For this neglect the state considered them undeserving of assistance in their old age or misfortune.

3. How unworthy, therefore, the conduct and maxims of many Christians in our days when put in comparison with the conduct and maxims of those wise pagans! How reprehensible the sentiments of those amongst us who look upon manual labor as a degrading occupation, and who think themselves disgraced by being obliged to put their hand to anything that would gain for them an honest livelihood! How dishonorable the life of those young men and women who spend their days in idleness and play, squandering the precious time the Almighty has given them to labor for eternity!

Shameless idlers! I address you in the words of the Wise Man: "Go to the ant to learn wisdom." For, that minute creature, by its industry to provide for itself during the winter, has been given you by God as a preceptor of your duty to labor and provide for your future welfare. Learn, no matter what may be your position in life, that you are naturally subject to a condition of labor, according to the remark of that wise king, who when speaking of royalty, said that if God had not intended kings to labor He would not have given them hands like other people. Learn from the teaching of our blessed Lord, that idleness is a sin that merits hell fire; since He tells us in the parable that the useless servant who buried his talent in the sand was "delivered up to exterior darkness where was weeping and gnashing of teeth." Learn from the Holy Spirit Who teaches in the book of Job, that "man is born to labor," even as the bird is born with tireless wing to traverse the aerial element.

As a Penalty of Sin.

1. But even if man were not born to labor, as by the sacred writers we are told he was; yet, is he bound to submit himself to the necessity of it as a penalty of sin. This we learn from the account of the Almighty's first dealings with our first parents in Paradise.

Pay attention, dearly beloved, to the trial of the fallen founder of our race, and to the sentence imposed on him as the penalty of his sin. "Because," said God to Adam, "thou hast harkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work. With labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken; for, dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return."—Gen. iii., 17-19.

St. Thomas, in explaining these words, says that they contain a commandment which obliges all men to some honest labor of body or mind. Do not imagine, therefore, that that famous sentence, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread all the days of thy life," was meant only for laboring men and poor mechanics. It was meant for all the children of Adam, and it regards us all. Give me one who is not a sinner. Give me one who is not of the sinful stock of Adam; we can dispense him from the penalty of labor; but since all have sinned, no one can be dispensed from labor which is the penalty of sin.

You have sinned, my dear brother; alas, how often! You know it. You must then do penance by "gaining

your bread in the sweat of your face." And for how long? "Till you return to the earth out of which you were taken."

You are a sinner, my dear sister. How many faults have you not committed, and perhaps made others commit by your levity and scandalous conduct? You must groan before God with David and beg pardon of Him, laying before Him the humiliation of your heart and the labor of your hands. You have sinned, young men, and have unhappily lost your Baptismal innocence. To what excesses has not the indulgence of your passions led you? You know it. It is to you in an especial manner, therefore, that the prophet addresses these words applicable to all according to the custom of the times in which he lived. "Turn the mill and grind corn; bear your shoulder" to the work. Yes, turn the mill and grind the corn that is to make your daily bread. Gird your loins for the work. Punish your rebellious flesh. Accustom your body to suffering. Bear your shoulder, that you may carry the yoke of labor; that the God of mercy may have compassion on you, and grant you the pardon of your sins.

In Imitation of Jesus Christ, Our Head.

1. But let me go on to say that as Christians we are bound to labor; since in this quality we ought to imitate Jesus Christ, our Head. He was "inured to labor from His youth," as the prophet had foretold of Him. The fathers of the Church relate that He lived for many years by the labor of His hands in the workshop of Joseph. When He came out of this painful and humiliating state, what fatigues did He not undergo traveling

through the cities and hamlets of Judea to announce the Gospel? If He called apostles to His company He willed that they be hardy workmen capable of fatigue and labor—men capable of going to the ends of the earth in the work of the Apostolate, and of being an example to others in the way that conducts to heaven. He commands them to preach to all those who should believe in Him that the Christian life is one of the cross, of suffering and mortification. We read in Scripture that St. Paul, occupied as he was in preaching the Gospel, ceased not to practise manual labor.

2. Nor could he suffer that there be among Christians idlers. "We entreat you, brethren," he says to the Thessalonians, "that you do your own business, and work with your own hands, as we commanded you." And this precept he urges more forcibly still on the same people and in the same letter, saying that "if any man will not work; neither let him eat."

Thus we see that to work becomes a Gospel precept and obliges by a new and holier title all those who profess the religion of Jesus Christ.

Learn, therefore, dearly beloved, the dignity of labor and the honor due to the workman, no matter in what condition of life Providence has placed him. Be yourselves zealous in the discharge of those duties your state calls on you to fulfil. If Providence has placed you in a state that dispenses you from the necessity of earning your bread; labor for others; labor for the poor; labor for the sick and miserable; labor for the instruction of youth; labor for the sanctification of souls; labor for the glory of God. Subject yourselves to work in the spirit of submission to the will of God Who ordains labor as our lot in life, whether as men, as penitents, or as Christians; that from natural works

they become supernatural ones, and merit for you the blessing of eternal rest.

SECOND SERMON: CONTRITION.

1. Contrition, its definition and analysis. First, sorrow—the consideration of what sin is and of what God, to whom sin is opposed, is in Himself, and in regard to us, facilitates sorrow. What is meant in the definition by a HEARTFELT *sorrow. Appeal of the prophet Joel.*

2. Accompanying sorrow for sin is a detestation of it as the instrument by which we offend God. Sin merits our hatred as well because of its being an outrage against God as because of its ill effects on the soul.

3. In this description of contrition I only bring out the three points that are particularly insisted on in the act of contrition ordinarily given in our prayer books.

4. The last element of contrition consists in the purpose of amendment: and it is here that most penitents fail in eliciting a true act of contrition. Illustration. The purpose of amendment must be, first, firm, and second, practical. Principle: The moral law obliges us not only to avoid sin, but also the immediate occasions of sin.

5. Conclusion. Appeal to examine whether past acts of contrition had all the elements required.

1. We have already taken a survey of the parts of Penance. We have taken note, moreover, of the *role* each of these parts plays in the make-up of the Sacrament. It now becomes our task to take up each of these parts separately, and explain in detail what may be useful to know concerning it. Let us devote this instruction to the first in the order of nature as well as of necessity, namely, Contrition.

This is defined to be "a heartfelt sorrow and detestation of sin, . . . with a firm resolution of amendment."

It is a sorrow; that is to say, a grief of heart, be-

cause of our having done a thing which we ought not to have done—of our having offended our God. And truly if we consider what sin is, and what God, to whom sin is opposed, is in Himself and in regard to us; we shall have little difficulty in conceiving this sorrow. What is God? He is the Sovereign Being—the Being infinite in all perfections. He is, moreover, our Creator, and our Last End. From Him we have received all things—our being; all temporal goods, those of nature and fortune; spiritual goods, those pertaining to the mind and free will; and lastly, supernatural goods, those of grace, to which is attached out title to eternal glory.

Well, sin enters in and disturbs all those relations. It is an uprising of our will against God, and an assertion of our right to act as we please, to the ignoring of the claims of His supreme will. For such a rupture of our relations with God; for such an act of rebellion against Him: it is right that we conceive sorrow and regret.

It is a heartfelt sorrow, that is, a sorrow that is not merely expressed in words, but one that is felt interiorly and that produces a grinding and pulverising of our feelings; and hence its name, "Contrition."

This heartfelt sorrow God and nature require; and hence, when the prophet preached repentance to the people he called out to them: "Be converted to the Lord in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning, and rend your hearts and not your garments."

2. Accompanying this sorrow for sin is a detestation of it as the instrument by which we offend Him. And here again if we reflect on sin we shall be led to hate it as the greatest of all evils. For so it is, inasmuch as it is an assault on God and an effort of the creature to destroy Him. And its effects on the soul, how dreadful are they! It deprives us of all spiritual gifts and privi-

leges. From being children of God and His beloved ones, it makes us His enemies and the objects of His anger. Our souls are made foul and dead in His sight, and we but await the moment of death to be cast forever into hell. Is it not just, then, that we conceive a hatred of it, and that we be prepared to suffer anything rather than again commit it?

3. And this brings me to the last element in Contrition: namely, the purpose of amendment.

But before I speak of it I will ask you to observe that I am only bringing out the three points that are particularly insisted on in the Act of Contrition. "O my God," you say, "I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee; and I detest my sins most sincerely because they displease Thee; and I am firmly resolved, by Thy holy grace, never more to offend Thee."

Now these protestations if they have any meaning on our lips, and if they are not a mere pretence, signify exactly what they express: namely, that we are touched to the heart with sorrow for our sins. "O my God, I am heartily sorry;" that we detest them; "My God, I detest my sins;" and that we are resolved, with God's help, never to commit them again. "My God, I am firmly resolved never more to offend Thee."

4. The last element of Contrition consists, I have said, in the purpose of amendment. It is in this that most people fail in Contrition, and consequently in the worthy reception of Penance. It is, therefore, to this point that I wish particularly to direct your attention.

It is often a subject to wonder that many go to confession regularly, appear sorry for their sins; and yet they in a short time fall back into their old ways, and, to use our Lord's words: "Their last state becomes worse than their first." What is the cause of this? The

source of their relapse is to be found most frequently in their want of true purpose of amendment.

Now, that that purpose of amendment be good and acceptable to God it must be gifted with two conditions: it must be firm; and it must be practical.

It must be firm, I say; not a vague and wavering inclination towards good in general, as is too often the case with penitents; but a steady and clear determination of the will.

It must be practical. Now, there are many who when going to Confession are resolved to avoid sin in their after lives; yet they take no practical measures to ensure their perseverance, but allow themselves to drift along in life as occasion may carry them.

To those I put these important questions: How are you going to insure your perseverance in good hereafter? What steps do you intend to take in order to prevent a relapse into your former sins? Are you going to avoid that particular sin of drunkenness, or impurity, or injustice, or swearing; and if so, what measures are you going to take in order to avoid it? Will you shun the company of those bad companions who were the cause of leading you into sin in the past? Will you avoid that house, that place, that amusement? Will you cease reading the class of books that in the past brought about your fall? Examine yourself honestly before God in this matter, and if you cannot with all sincerity of soul say, "I will," then, I say, your purpose of amendment is defective; an essential element is wanting to your contrition; your confession is a bad one. For remember that the law of God obliges us to avoid not only sin, but also the immediate occasions of sin. Hence, the man who goes wilfully into the immediate occasion of sin; who keeps dangerous company, for instance;

who frequents those places, or takes part in those amusements where he is in danger of falling; who frequents a certain saloon where in the past he was in the habit of getting drunk; that man, I say, by so doing has already fallen into sin. I grant you that it may so happen that on a certain occasion, or on a certain series of occasions, you may not commit an external act of sin; that you do not get drunk; or that you do not commit bad actions; or that you do not speak bad language. You are not on that account justified before God; for you went wilfully into the occasion where you ran the risk of committing sin.

5. Take to heart, dear brethren, these lessons on the necessity of true contrition for the obtaining pardon for your sins in Penance. They are the most important practical truths that can engage your attention.

If, then, you find that you have for years past been relapsing habitually into a certain habit of sin; examine yourself carefully, and see whether your contrition for that sin had all the elements required; whether you were animated with a sincere sorrow for it; whether you truly detested it as an act by which you offended God; and whether you had a true purpose of amendment.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

FIRST SERMON: ZEAL. MOTIVES TO EXCITE US TO ITS PRACTICE.

"Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned. Thrice I suffered shipwreck. A night and a day I was in the depth of the sea," etc.—Cor. xi., 19-33.

I.

1. Introduction—The object of the great Apostle in enumerating his labors and sufferings in the cause of the apostolate was to nullify the evil strivings of false teachers who thus early appeared in the Church, and tried to seduce souls by their plausible language and conduct. What a record of labor and sacrifice in the cause of religion! Traces of his apostolic journeys show him to be a veritable Alexander in zeal for the conversion of the world.

2. This gives me occasion to treat today of zeal for the glory of God and for the salvation of the neighbor which was the mainspring of all his actions. Definition of zeal—a passionate ardor springing from the principle of love. It is to love what flame is to fire. It is moreover the sole sign of love that is not equivocal.

3. The first motive to incite us to the practice of holy zeal is its excellence. Zeal being an active principle, its excellence is known by the excellence of its proper object. The primary object of zeal is to honor, serve, and glorify God by ourselves, and to cause Him to be honored, served, and glorified by others; the exercise of zeal—therefore, the noblest occupation a creature could be engaged in.

4. The secondary object of zeal is the salvation of souls. To labor for the salvation of souls, is it not to become co-operators with Jesus Christ in the work of the Redemption? Comparison of the occupation of those who thus labor with that of those who hold the highest positions in the world.

5. That which enhances the value of works of zeal in the cause of the neighbor is the preciousness of souls and their value in God's sight—the magnificent rewards promised by God to those who contribute to their salvation.

II.

1. Holy zeal is not only most excellent in itself; it is most beneficial in its results—enumeration of these results.

2. Comparison of these results with the achievements of men laboring in worldly callings. The results of the labors of these, are trifling and end with time; of those, are incalculable and eternal.

III.

1. The prodigious acts of zeal of our Lord are recounted. The Gospel parables referring to this zeal.

2. The wondrous zeal of the saints—their great works of sacrifice for the advancement of the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

3. Appeal to emulate the zeal of former Dominicans -the reward.

Its Excellence in Itself.

1. If the Apostle here enumerates his labors and sufferings in the cause of the apostolate, it is not out of a spirit of vain boasting that he does so. His object is to nullify the evil strivings of certain false teachers who, even thus early appear in the church, and try to seduce souls by their plausible language and conduct.

The watchful pastor meeting those evil minded men on their own ground reckons up his own exploits in the cause of religion, and thus strives to save guileless souls from the snares set for them before yet they are firmly established in the faith of Jesus Christ.

But what a record, dearly beloved, and what sacrifices in the cause of religion on the part of that wonderful man who, though he styles himself the least of the Apostles by reason of his past sins, and for such he looks upon himself as unworthy to have shared the society and friendship of Jesus Christ; yet, could say with truth that he had labored more than all the other Apostles in the spread of the Gospel. And if, indeed,

with the help of map and testament, we follow him in his several apostolic journeys during the twenty-five years of his apostolate, from Antioch to Cyprus, and thence on through the countries of Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Laoconia, and back again after five years to Antioch and Jerusalem; and thence again, on a second journey, through the whole continent of Asia Minor, and thence on through the provinces of Macedonia and Thessalay, on to Athens and Corinth, and back a second time to Jerusalem; and on again, on a third missionary journey through the same countries, taking in Lydia and Illyria, till his return on a third visit to Jerusalem, where he is taken prisoner and kept four years in chains; and if, after he is liberated in Rome, we trace his wanderings in Spain and Italy, where he is martyred, does he not appear another Alexander to whom the world is too small to satisfy the cravings of his apostolic zeal?

2. The enumeration of these labors of the great Apostle gives me occasion to speak to you today on that virtue which was the mainspring of all his actions — namely, on zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of the neighbor; and I desire particularly to lay before you the motives that should impel you to imitate his example by exercising it according to your power and opportunity.

Now, this zeal of which I speak is a passionate ardor springing from the principle of love. It is an ardor, I say, that carries us to attempt great and generous things for the glory of God and the good of souls. It is to love what flame is to fire; for, just as flame is that which is most pure and perfect in fire; so zeal is that which is most active and precious in love. It is, moreover, the sole sign of love that is not equivocal; for

without it we can scarcely flatter ourselves that we have this love at all, and all the other proofs that we can give of its presence in our soul are very uncertain. In a word, if we love God truly; we shall do all in our power to procure his honor and glory. If we love our neighbor sincerely; we shall labor with earnestness to procure his sole good, which is the salavation of his soul. Behold in what consists this zeal of which I speak, and the motives for whose exercise I will now lay before you.

3. Now, out of the many motives that I might adduce to incite you to labor for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, I will select a few, and the first is the excellence of zeal itself.

The excellence of an active principle, such as it is, is known by the excellence of its proper object. The primary object of zeal is to honor, serve, and glorify God, by ourselves, and to cause Him to be honored, served, and glorified by others. How excellent, how sublime, therefore, is zeal. What honor for a vile creature to be employed in glorifying Him before Whom all created beings are nothing to contribute to the honor of the King of kings.

This is the occupation of the angels and saints in heaven. It is the noblest occupation they could be engaged in. To exercise works of zeal, therefore, is to share with them in the noblest functions of which a creature is capable. It is to be associated in anticipation with the elect of God and with the blessed spirits who minister before His throne.

4. The secondary object of zeal is the salvation of souls; and here again we see its excellence. To labor for the salvation of souls, is it not to enter into association with the labors of Jesus Christ, and to become

co-operators in the work of the Redemption? What work grander or more admirable?

O brethren, the lovers of the world think it a great thing to discharge the duties of certain worldly positions. They ambition the honor of being allowed to wait on their sovereign, to serve as ministers of the government, to command armies, to sit as judges in the superior courts. But what are all these employments in comparison with the illustrious employment of those who occupy themselves in saving souls, and thus making themselves fellow-laborers with Jesus Christ in the great work for which He came into the world?

5. That which enhances the value of works of zeal in the cause of the neighbor is the preciousness of immortal souls. What are they? They are living images of the Diety. They are works of the right hand of the Almighty; they are prizes gained at the cost of the Blood of Jesus Christ; they are beings destined to possess the Sovereign Good in Glory; they are princesses of the heavenly court. Being in the state of grace, their beauty is ravishing; their riches are immense; their glory rears itself to heaven. They are the objects of the complacency of God. They are the beloved daughters of the Eternal Father; the spouses of Jesus Christ; the temples of the Holy Ghost. The love and tenderness which God has for them is inconceivable; and, hence, He leaves nothing undone to procure their advancement in perfection, and to add to their beauty; and we cannot do anything more agreeable to God than to contribute to their sanctification. Of this He assures us in many places of Scripture. He assures us that those who by their instructions shall have procured the spiritual good of the neighbor, shall shine for all eter-

nity as stars of ravishig beauty (Dan. xiii.); that he who shall procure the conversion of the sinner shall cover a multitude of sins (Jac. v.).

But what can be conceived on this subject more extraordinary than that which is said in the Gospel—that there is more glory in heaven over the conversion of a single sinner than for the perseverance of ninety-nine just. Must not Heaven think a great deal of a soul? and how must it not esteem those who labor with zeal to procure the salvation of a thing so dear to it? Ah, my brethren, I say again, if we were well persuaded of these great truths what would we not do for the advancement of the glory of God and for the salvation of souls; and what sacrifices would we not undergo on their behalf?

Its Beneficial Results.

1. But zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of the neighbor is not only most excellent in itself; it is most beneficial in its results. To parody the words of the poet: it blesses him who exercises it and him in whose behalf it is exercised. Not only is God honored, served, and glorified, by zeal, but souls are sanctified; their eternal salvation is procured; the Kingdom of Jesus Christ is extended; the empire of Satan is weakened; the number of saints and the elect is multiplied. What wondrous results, dearly beloved—aye, even if a person were to save only a single soul in his whole lifetime, or even if he were to prevent only a single mortal sin! By so doing he shall have done a work which surpasses the greatest actions that have respect to things of earth.

2. It is true, then, what the Holy Ghost teaches us

in the book of Proverbs (xvi.): that the man who labors for his own salvation and that of his neighbor is greater, and does incomparably more than the man who takes cities, gains battles, and makes the conquest of entire kingdoms.

And, in fact, how do all those efforts of the great ones of the world—all those actions that people style heroic, those victories, those conquests, those so vaunted feats of heroes—how do they all end? Do they not end in nothingness? Are they not in reality and before God only trifles and vain amusements? When those things are past, are they not as if they had never been; and does not time devour and obliterate all the works of man? But in procuring the glory of God and the salvation of souls a man labors for eternity. He does a work, the effects of which shall never end.

The Example of Jesus Christ and the Saints.

1. See what an example our Lord and the saints have given us in this respect; and this is the last motive I shall give to urge you to it. What has not our loving Saviour done and suffered for the salvation of men and for the glory of His Father? Oh, prodigy of love! The Sovereign Lord humbles Himself even to taking on Himself the form of Man in order to save man. He clothes Himself with our miseries. He wills to be born in a stable; to lead a life of poverty and misery. What labors does He not undergo during the thirty years of His life? He renders Himself obedient even to the death of the cross. Yes, "it was for us men and for our salvation," says the Nicene Creed, that He did all this. What affection, what ardent zeal has He not shown for the salvation of souls? This He makes

known to us in the Gospel. At one time He represents Himself to us as the Good Shepherd Who lays down His life for His sheep. He is the True Pastor Who goes to seek in the desert of the world those sheep that are gone astray. At another, He is the Good Samaritan Who heals the wounds of the poor stricken one, and Who brings him into a place of security. Now He is the Merchant Who seeks goodly pearls, and Who sacrifices everything that He may acquire them. What did not our Divine Saviour do to convert sinners? He prayed for them. He pressed them; He solicited them; He threatened them. He made Himself familiar with them. He ate at table with them. He made Himself all in all to them. He availed Himself of all the charms of His goodness to draw them to Him, and He allowed Himself no rest till, finally, He gave the last drop of His Blood to redeem them. This was the Baptism wherewith He desired with such ardor to be baptised, as He testified to His Apostles a little before His death.

Would not one say that He stood in need of man, and that His happiness and glory depended on their salvation? and could He not say with truth, by His prophet: "What more, O race of man, could I have done for thee that I have not done? Be ye witness between thee and Me."

And as to the saints—of the zeal with which they were animated; the matter of my text gives us but a sample. What have they not done and suffered through this zeal? Have they not sacrificed their rest, their goods, their health, their lives? What labors have not so many heroic men and women gone through for zeal? Some consecrated themselves to the service of the sick in hospitals. Others, like St. Paul, quitted their country, their parents, their all, to go to the ends of the earth

in order to carry the light of the Gospel to pagan nations. Others, again, spent their life and exhausted their strength in the work of the ministry at home. Many noble-hearted men and women amongst the laity gave their property to found colleges and monasteries, and to create other means for the sanctification of the neighbor. Others exposed themselves to the fury of the impious and even sacrificed their lives for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Those who were not able to do anything else prayed, practised mortifications and penance for the same end. But what shall we say of a Moses, or of a St. Paul, who were willing to be anathema for the salvation of their brethren.

3. And we, my brethren; are we willing generously to sacrifice ourselves in advancing the glory of God and the salvation of souls?

O souls of our fathers, blessed spirits of the ancient Dominicans, come down and inspire us with something of that spirit of zeal which of old stirred in your hearts and carried the world by storm. Teach us to forget our little selves in the glorious cause of the apostolate. Let the remembrance of the glories of Paris, of Bologna, of Florence, of Fiesole, of Toulouse, of Carcasonne, of Rome, inspire us to spend our lives in the practice of prayer, even as the lamp of the sanctuary consumes itself to the socket in the presence of Jesus. Let the remembrance of the doctors whose chairs were raised in the public squares when the halls were found too small for their vast audience, animate us with a zeal for study by which we may afterwards enlighten the world. Let the remembrance of the fourteen thousand Dominican martyrs, who gave their lives for the spread of the faith in the thirteenth century, teach us a generous love for souls perishing in paganism. Let

the remembrance of our Irish martrys who fought the good fight for faith and piety in the penal times, whose heirs we are, whose traditions we inherit, whose blood has sanctified our Province, and whose sacrifices have immortalized it; let their remembrance, I say, stir us up to emulate their zeal and carry on the good work their failing hands have transmitted to us; so that fighting to the end the good fight in the cause of God and righteousness, we may one day be received among that immortal band of apostolic men and women who with Jesus Christ sit on thrones, the judges of the world.

SECOND SERMON: GIFTS OF CONTRITION: THAT IT BE SUPERNATURAL.

1. Contrition endowed with four gifts or conditions—that it be supernatural, interior, supreme, and universal. That it be interior means that it be from the heart, as explained in the preceding instruction.

2. That Contrition be supernatural it requires, first, that it be elicited by the help of grace, and second, that it be founded on supernatural motives. Why the former requirement is needed.

3. Explanation of the word "motive". Motives are natural and supernatural. Supernatural motives are founded on faith, and from their nature incite us to the performance of supernatural acts. Sorrow arising from natural motives does not suffice for obtaining the forgiveness of sin.

4. Five supernatural motives commonly given in books of Christian doctrine. Why these motives are supernatural is shown.

5. Sorrow springing from the motive of the love of God the most perfect of all, and is called Contrition, or Perfect Contrition; whereas, sorrow springing from the other motives is called imperfect Contrition, or Attrition. Contrition arising from the perfect motive of the love of God of itself remits all mortal sin, but still the law of confession is obligating. The unwisdom of those who neglect this means of justification.

6. Exhortation to make sorrow for sin supernatural by prayer, by reflection on the great supernatural truths, and by a lively conception of God's mercy.

1. When we have learned what Contrition is and what are its parts we begin to have a knowledge of it, but there are yet many things to be known concerning it—and first, that it must be endowed with four gifts or conditions. These are: that it be supernatural, interior, supreme, and universal.

I explained in my last instruction what is meant by saying that Contrition must be interior: I said that it must come from the heart, and not from the lips merely.

2. Let me go on to explain the second gift of Contrition—that it be supernatural. When I say that Contrition must be supernatural, I mean, in the first place, that it must be elicited by the help of grace; and secondly, that it must be founded on supernatural motives.

It must be elicited by the aid of grace. Every means must be proportioned to the end it is destined to bring about; and as justification is a supernatural state, it can be brought about only by the help of grace, or supernatural aid from God.

It must be founded on supernatural motives. Now, there may be some amongst you to whom this term may appear a little obscure.

3. Let me explain then that a motive is something that moves the will to act. When we do anything wilfully we are always moved to do it by the apprehension of some good to be attained, or of some evil to be avoided. That good to be attained, or that evil that we strive to shun, is called the motive; that is, the moving power of our action. I will try to make this clearer to you by one or two illustrations. A tradesman works assidu-

ously all the week. What is it that gives him this constancy in his work? It is the hope of remuneration to be obtained when the work is done. This expectation of reward is the motive of his work. Or, again, a man runs from a wild beast: what impels him to do so? The fear of danger. That fear is the motive of his action.

Now, you are to understand that motives are of two kinds—natural and supernatural. Natural motives are those which move us as men looking at things from a worldly point of view, and without any special relation to God. Supernatural ones, on the contrary, are those which are founded on Faith, and which of their nature incite us to the performance of religious or supernatural actions.

Our Contrition, I have said, must be founded on supernatural motives. It will not suffice for instance to regret our sins because of some temporal disadvantage their commission brings upon us. The drunkard will not receive pardon from God, because of his regret that his drunkenness brought upon him loss of health, or position, or property. The impure man will not be forgiven, because he regrets the evils brought upon him by his sin. The unjust man will not be pardoned, because he weeps over the folly that has brought upon him the loss of his liberty or his credit. We must ascend if we would obtain pardon of our sins, and ground our Contrition on supernatural motives.

4. There are five of these commonly given in books of Christian Doctrine: the fear of hell, or of other supernatural punishments; the apprehension of the loss of heaven; the apprehension of the deformity of sin, and of those sins in particular which we have committed; the thought of our ingratitude to God, Who has done so much for us; and the thought of our

having offended God, Who is so good in Himself. These are supernatural motives, because they are founded on Faith, and because of their nature they incite us to the striving for the possession of supernatural goods, or to the shunning of supernatural evils. It is only by Faith that we can know of the existence of hell or heaven. It is Faith that makes known to us the deformity of sin, and the evil that it works in our souls. It is by Faith we learn all that God has done for us in creating and redeeming us, and in making His possession our last end. It is Faith that teaches us the goodness and perfection of God: His sanctity, His truth, His justice, and all His other attributes, and it is this knowledge coming from our Faith that moves us to sorrow for our sins. Well, our Contrition must arise out of the consideration of one or other of those great supernatural truths.

And surely the reflection on any one of them ought to be sufficient to awaken in our breasts a heartfelt sorrow for our sins. Who can think on the dread fires of that prison of despair to which his sins have doomed him without feeling the most lively pang of grief for their commission? Who can stand in spirit at the foot of the Cross of Calvary and see the Saviour smitten to death, that will not feel his heart ready to break with grief, for that his misdeeds had part in that great tragedy? Or, lastly, who can reflect on the infinite goodness and sanctity of God Whose bounties are diffused throughout the universe: Whose beauty ravishes the angels: on Whose mercies we all depend: that will not feel his heart attracted by love of such goodness and beauty, and will not be filled with sorrow, for that he has by his sins put himself in opposition to Him and become His enemy?

5. Contrition springing from this last motive is the most perfect and generous of all; and hence, it is called in the language of theology "Perfect Contrition"; whereas, sorrow springing from the other motives is called "Imperfect Contrition, or Attrition."

Contrition arising from the perfect motive of the love of God has this special virtue in it, that of itself, and independently of the Sacrament, it remits all mortal sin. For, there can be no sin on the soul, no state of hatred of God in him who is enamored of God's goodness, and who loves God for His own sake. On the instant therefore that we conceive sorrow for our sins through the motive of the love of God, those sins are dissipated, just as the rising sun chases the darkness of the night; and our soul is flooded with the light of sanctifying grace, and is again made the dwelling place of God.

But though Perfect Contrition of itself justifies us, we are not on that account exempted from the obligation of Confession. For Confession being instituted as a law by Christ for all those who have fallen into sin after Baptism, we are still obliged to submit to it, even though we may by Perfect Contrition have already regained God's friendship.

And here let me deplore the unwisdom of those who neglect to employ this ever-ready means of justification. Many when they fall into sin, instead of retrieving themselves by promptly eliciting acts of Perfect Contrition, allow themselves to remain in that sad state for months, perhaps for years, to the evident danger of the loss of their souls.

Those by their inaction deprive themselves of many great goods, and expose themselves to great, perhaps irretrievable evils. Weakened by their sin they contract the danger of coming by other and more serious falls.

They familiarize themselves to a life of sin; while, at the same time, they deprive themselves of God's special helps usually accorded to the just; and of the merits and virtues to be acquired in the meantime.

6. And now to conclude, let me exhort you to strive to make your sorrow for sin supernatural by begging the help of God in prayer; by earnest reflection on those great supernatural truths; and by a lively conception of God's mercy: frequently repeating in the depths of your heart the words of the penitent psalmist: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy; and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out my iniquities. . . . For against Thee alone have I sinned, and I have done evil before Thee."

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

FIRST SERMON: DEVOTION TO THE PASSION.

I.

"Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man. For, He shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon, and after they have scourged Him they will put Him to death, and the third day He shall rise again."—Luke xviii., 31-33.

1. Introduction—Striking prominence given by the Church to devotion to the Passion; it seems to dominate in everything. This shown in the sacred liturgy, as well as in popular devotions.

2. There are many reasons for this; but there is one that I wish to invite attention to today; and it is, that the keeping continually before our minds the Passion of our Lord is of all occupations the most agreeable to God. This shown from the fact that it was the most ordinary occupation of our blessed Lord, of the Blessed Virgin and the saints.

3. That it was our Lord's chief occupation is shown from His many allusions to it during the course of His life—"I have a Baptism," etc. "Behold we go up to Jerusalem," etc. Everything relating to His life brought the circumstances of the Passion to His memory—His Incarnation, His birth, His Circumcision, His Presentation in the temple, etc. Hence, also, His remarkable reply to the sons of Zebedee: "can you drink of the chalice WHICH I AM DRINKING?" *What is still more surprising is that He entertained Himself with this thought even at His Transfiguration.*

II.

1. As to the Blessed Mother, her heart was pierced with the "sword of sorrow", not only when she stood at the foot of the Cross, but during her whole life, especially from the time of Zachary's prophecy in the temple. Hence, the application to her by the Church of the words of the prophet: "O all you that pass by the way," etc., and the title given her of "Queen of Martyrs", etc.

2. The Apostles were not only the witnesses of the Passion but also the zealous preachers of it—"We preach Christ crucified" (St. Paul). And in his Epistle to the Hebrews he exhorts them, saying: "RECOGITATE"; *"think, and think again over Him*

Who suffered from sinners so great a contradiction," etc. He would have us occupy ourselves with the meditation on this great fact even till death; nay, even till the end of the world. "You shall announce the death of the Lord until He come."

3. Conclusion—Since the meditation on the Passion was the chief occupation of our Lord, the Blessed Mother, and the saints; for all could make profession of the saying of St. Paul: "I live in the faith of the Son of God Who loved me, and Who delivered Himself for me"; it must be ours also.

I.

1. To the thoughtful observer of the Church's spiritual life the prominence given by her to devotion to the Passion of our Lord is very striking and impressive. And this feeling is in no way lessened by the consciousness of the overshadowing importance to mankind of that great tragedy. Everything in connection with our Lord's life on earth is, we know, superhuman and divine; and everything points onward to the consummation of His life's work, the Redemption.

But still, in Christian worship, devotion of the Passion seems to dominate everything. Thus, we have that beautiful series of Passion feasts celebrated weekly from Septuagesima Sunday to Easter. Other feasts commemorative of the Passion are met with up and down the calendar. One whole week, the "Great Week" by eminence of the year, is devoted to it. The whole season of Lent is tinged with the same devotion. Even the triumphal note of the Easter canticle is softened by the tender strain reminiscent of the Cross of Calvary.

And as to popular devotions, behold these walls decorated with scenes from the Passion; your beads which invite you to tell your sorrowful mysteries; every object of Church use or worship marked with the sign of the cross; your meditations, your private devotions, all

redolent of the mystery of the Passion and death of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

2. Now, why all this? What is the reason for this so persistent devotion of the Church to the mystery of the Passion.

Well, dearly beloved, doubtless there are many reasons; but there are one or two that I wish to invite your attention to today. And the first is that the keeping continually before our minds the Passion of our Lord is, of all occupations, the most agreeable to God. That it is so, I will show you by this short argument.

3. That which was the most ordinary occupation of our blessed Lord, of the Blessed Virgin and the saints is, without doubt, one the most agreeable to God.

Now, the remembrance of His Passion and death was the great occupation of our adorable Saviour, of His Blessed Mother, and of those other holy personages, the saints. And first, Jesus Christ. "The Author and Finisher of Our Faith," not only suffered with joy the cruel punishment of the Cross, "despising the shame and ignominy that were attached to it": He furthermore took pleasure in thinking of it and was occupied with it during His whole life. The desire He had of accomplishing on this point the will of His Eternal Father kept Him continually applied to it. Hence it was that He entertained himself so often on it with His disciples. "I have a Baptism wherewith I am to be Baptized" (i. e., in His own Blood), said He to them, "and how am I straightened until it be accomplished." Mark how in the text of today's Gospel He recounts to them all the circumstances of His Passion. "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem and all that has been foretold of the Son of Man shall be accomplished. He shall be delivered, not only to the cruelty of the Jews, but from them He shall

pass into the hands of the Gentiles."—Behold the treason! "He shall be mocked."—Behold the raillaries and the contempt! "He shall be spit upon."—Behold the outrages and the spittle! "He shall be scourged."—Behold the scourging! "After scourging Him they shall put Him to death."—Behold His death! To which He added, in order to console them, that "He shall rise again the third day."

Thus, it was not only when He was apprehended by the soldiers, or when He saw the Cross on which He was to be affixed, or when He heard the streets of Jerusalem resound with those awful cries: "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" that He thought of His Passion and death. He thought of it from the first moment of His Conception. He had no sooner taken a Body than He considered that it was to be one day imolated in the place of skulls for the salvation of sinners.

If on coming into the world He is placed on a bed of straw, He thinks that He will one day lie on the harder bed of the Cross. If some drops of Blood are shed by Him at the Circumcision, He represents to Himself that much more will be drawn from Him in the hall of Pilate, and on Calvary. If He is carried to the temple to be offered to His Father as the sole Victim capable of appeasing Him, He looks on this "morning sacrifice" as a sure presage of the "evening sacrifice" which is to end His life. "My life," says He by the prophet, "commenced in sorrows; it continued in labors; it will end in sufferings."

Hence, it was that the sons of Zebedee, having presented themselves to Him, with their mother to petition Him that He would give them the first places in His Kingdom, He asked them, as St. Matthew relates, "if they could drink of the Chalice which he was

about to drink." St. Mark relates the incident a little otherwise, and says that He wished to know of them "if they could drink of the Chalice which He was drinking, and could be baptized with the baptism wherewith He was being baptized?" putting the present for the future.

"Alas, Lord!" permit us to ask You, "what Chalice are You now drinking? You preach; You instruct the people; You work miracles which draw on You the esteem and admiration of the whole world. Do You call that a Chalice?" "Yes, My disciples, there is a Chalice that I am drinking and a Baptism of Blood that I receive. I see this Baptism of Blood as if I were already attached to the pillar and the Cross. I walk in the sight of this cruel and ignominious death which is prepared for Me on Calvary."

But what is still more surprising is that He wills to entertain Himself with it even on Thabor with Moses and Elias amid the joys and glory of His Transfiguration. "He spoke," says St. Luke, "of the excess of His sufferings, and of the manner in which He was to end His life in Jerusalem." Thus, you see, my friends, that the Cross of Jesus Christ was not a passing object for Him. He had it always before His eyes. He was always thinking of it. He never lost sight of it from the commencement to the consummation of His Sacrifice.

II.

1. The saints, treading in the footsteps of their divine Master, have had for His Passion a tender and affecting devotion. But among all the saints none was more deeply touched by it than the most holy Virgin. Her heart was pierced with the "sword of sorrow," according to the prophecy of the venerable Simeon, not

only when she was at the foot of the Cross, and when she saw her cherished Son die, but during her whole life. The remembrance of a God dying on a cross for sinners was for her a sort of martyrdom more cruel than death itself; and the Church has no difficulty in applying to this blessed Mother compassionating the sufferings of Jesus Christ, her Son, those words of the prophet Jeremias: "O all you who pass by the way, attend, and see if there be sorrow like to my sorrow?"

2. If, from the Blessed Virgin we pass to the Apostles, we see in Scripture that they were not only the witnesses of all our Lord suffered, but that they were, moreover, the zealous preachers of it. Their great care and application were to inflame the hearts of all their hearers with the love of a God crucified. They were never ashamed of the Cross. They preached it to all the peoples of the earth. They all said with St. Paul "We preach Christ and Him crucified." They were so full of this thought that the Apostle writing to the Hebrews, exhorted them to meditate upon it continually. "Remember Him who bore such contradiction from sinners, in order that you may not be wearied, failing in your souls." Weigh well that expression as represented in the Latin, "Recogitate." It is as if he said to them: "Think, and think again, over Him Who suffered from sinners so great a contradiction, in order that you may not lose courage and fall into dejection amid the evils that you suffer."

It is not alone for some hours, or even some days, St. Paul would have us meditate on this great subject; He would have us occupy ourselves with it even till the second coming of Jesus Christ. "You shall announce the death of the Lord until He come," which comprises all the ages of the Church, and all the time of our life.

For the coming of the Lord for us will be at the end of our life, as it will be at the end of the world for the whole Church. Even to then the death of Jesus Christ must be announced, not only at the altar in the celebration of the Holy Mysteries, but, furthermore, all the true disciples of our Lord will make it a duty to meditate on it: "You shall announce the death of the Lord until He come."

3. O my brethren, since the principal occupation of our Lord upon earth was to think of the cruel death to which He saw Himself condemned for sin; since this was the great devotion of the most holy Virgin, the Apostles, and the early Christians, and other holy personages of which it would take too long to give you examples; for all made profession of saying with St. Paul: "I live in the faith of the Son of God Who loved me, and Who delivered Himself for me." In a word, since the whole Church makes the Passion of our Saviour the principal object of its piety, its love, and gratitude towards God; let us meditate upon it; embrace it; and occupy ourselves, all our life, with a practice so holy.

SECOND SERMON: GIFTS OF CONTRITION THAT IT BE SUPREME AND UNIVERSAL.

I.

1. Our Contrition to be supreme, must exceed every other sorrow; and this, first, because it is destined to be put in the balance of divine justice against the outrage of mortal sin; second, because it is a substitute for the torments of hell which the sinner had deserved; third, because it is the remedy which cures our souls of the frightful wounds which sin had inflicted on them; fourth, because it ought to bring about in all sinners somewhat of the wonderful results it brought about in the great penitents, such as David, Paul, Augustine, Mary Magdalen, and others.

2. The sorrow I speak of, however, is not a sensible sorrow which makes us shed tears, but a sorrow which works in our hearts the detestation of our sins above all things, and which makes us prefer the love of God before all things, even life itself.

II.

1. That our Contrition be universal means that it extend to all mortal sins. This condition is not so common as people ordinarily think. Just as king Saul preserved the life of Agag, king of the Amalecites, even against the orders of God; so, many reserve a particular vice, a favorite passion, which they are unwilling to sacrifice.

2. Appeal—To examine whether we may not have a predominant vice which we are unwilling to give up. If so, then we have no true contrition, and consequently no pardon to hope for.

3. Conclusion—We must renounce our favorite vice, even as the prophet Samuel "hewed to pieces before the Lord" Agag, the king of God's relentless enemies.

I.

That Our Contrition Be Supreme.

1. We have already considered two of the gifts of Contrition- that it be sorrowful, namely, and that it be supernatural. The third gift is that it be sovereign.

Now, when I say that our Contrition must be sovereign, I mean that it must exceed every other sorrow. The sorrow that we are to have for our sins must be greater than that which we feel for the loss of all things we hold dear in the world. It must be greater than that which we feel for the loss of our parents, our honor, our goods, our health. We must be even in the disposition of being ready to sacrifice life itself in the midst of torments rather than again commit a single mortal sin.

You will ask why? I answer: first, Contrition is destined to repair the outrage done to God by sin. Now, as mortal sin contains an infinite malice, inasmuch as it

attacks a Being infinite in greatness, and Who merits, therefore, infinite respect; it follows that Contrition ought to be something very precious and very considerable to be put in the balance of divine Justice against it.

Second, Contrition holds the place of the torments of hell which the sinner had merited. Brethren, your faith tells you how terrible are those everlasting fires. How great then, how efficacious ought to be the tears of repentence that are to extinguish them.

Third, Contrition is the remedy which cures our souls of the wounds which sin had inflicted on them. How great, how powerful must this remedy be, to bring about so great an effect.

Fourth, Contrition ought to bring about in all sinners something of that which it brought about in the saints, for whom it procured the remission of their sins. Now what prodigies did Contrition not work in many illustrious penitents? What did it not bring about in a St. Augustine, a St. Paul, a St. Mary Magdalen, and many others. It impelled them to the practice of the most rigorous penance. It confined numbers of them in the most frightful deserts. It buried others whilst yet alive in tombs and caverns. It filled monasteries. It separated numbers from friends and country; from all the pleasures, from all the advantages, from all the satisfactions of the world. It dried up their flesh. It made of them walking skeletons. See what it did in the case of holy David, who assures us that from being accustomed "to mingle ashes with his bread, and tears with his drink, his flesh became dried up, and his skin cleaved to his bones." It was so great in some that it caused their instant death, as we learn from many

examples that are recorded in the lives of the saints, and that are cited by authors worthy of all credit.

2. Bear in mind, however, that I do not speak here of a sensible sorrow, of a sorrow which makes us shed tears. For there are people who weep and sob, and who yet have no Contrition; there are others who do not weep, and who, nevertheless, have a true regret for their sins. But I speak of a sorrow that works in the heart of man the detestation of his sins above all things, and that makes him prefer the love of God before all things, even life itself.

II.

That Our Contrition Be Universal.

1. The last gift of Contrition is that it be universal. Our Contrition must be universal: that is to say, it must extend to all mortal sins; that is to say, it places the penitent in the disposition of being ready to suffer death rather than to commit a single one. This condition is not so common as people ordinarily think. There are many who in this imitate the conduct of king Saul in regard to the Amalecites. You remember the history of that famous king of the Israelites, and of his downfall. God commanded him to exterminate the whole wicked race of the Amalecites without sparing a single individual; but the unfortunate monarch giving ear to his inclination rather than to the order of God, spared the life of Agag, the king of this people, and thus committed a sin which resulted in his ruin.

It is in this way that many sinners act. God commands them to exterminate and detest all their sins without exception. But many reserve an Agag, I mean

a particular vice, a favorite passion, which they cannot resolve to sacrifice. A miser, for instance, has a great horror of drunkenness, of impurity, of revenge; but he perseveres in his unlawful attachment to riches. He is unwilling to desist from unjust means of acquiring them, and does not restore his ill-gotten goods, as he is obliged. An impure man, on the contrary, looks upon avarice as a baneful vice. He gives freely. He is even prodigal rather than attached to riches; but as to his predominant passion, his darling vice, his proximate occasion: he cannot resolve to make an entire sacrifice of that. A drunkard has no difficulty in pardoning injuries. He has an extreme hatred of lying and theft; but he can never resolve to give up drunkenness. And so with others.

2. Examine yourselves seriously and see whether you have not your favorite vice, for which you have, ordinarily, no true sorrow; of which you scarcely ever correct yourselves, and which accompanies you, therefore, through life.

And, yet, if you do not detest that predominant vice, as well as the others; if you do not labor to destroy it, you have no true contrition, and consequently no pardon, no salvation, to hope for; because we have need of only a single mortal sin to destroy us; and because if that single sin remains unrepented of, it remains unpardoned, and all the others remain to keep it company.

3. The Book of Kings relates that the prophet Samuel took king Agag, who was a great fat man, and hewed him to pieces before the Lord, and thus saved the people from sharing in the punishment of Saul.

Brethren, you must each of you slay your Agag. You must cut to pieces your well nourished vice if you would be saved from the destruction that awaits you, and re-

ceive countenance from your outraged God. May you do so, and may the fruit of these reflections be that when you approach the holy tribunal of Penance you come with a Contrition gifted with those essential conditions.

And, O Lord, God, Almighty, since Contrition is a gift of Your mercy, we beseech You refuse it not to us. Break our hearts with grief at the thought of having offended You.

Ah, how can we think without dying of regret that we have outraged our Creator; that we have insulted the Sovereign Master; that we have crucified our Father and Saviour; that we have sheathed the sword in the bosom of our God. Let use resolve, saying, "O my God, I will recount to you in the bitterness of my heart, all the wanderings of my life. I will weep over them all my days. I will detest them even till death. I will condemn myself from this moment to perform a severe penance, that I may calm your just anger, and find favor at the throne of Your mercy."

SECOND PART

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

CLAIMS OF MARY TO OUR DEVOTION.

FIRST DISCOURSE: THE GREATNESS OF HER GRACES AND HER DIGNITY AS MOTHER OF GOD.

1. Introduction—This festival has a special significance for us, since our country has been placed under the patronage of Mary, with the title of her Immaculate Conception. This gives me occasion to address you today on the subject of devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

2. Mary claims our devotion, first of all, by reason of the greatness of her graces, and of her dignity in the heirarchy of beings. After Almighty God and the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ, there is no being so great as Mary.

3. This greatness commenced at the first moment of her existence with the privilege of her Immaculate Conception. What all that meant; hence, the wonderful allusions of scripture applied to her by the saints and the Church.

4. Wonders surrounding Mary's birth. That birth awaited since the beginning of the world as the near sign of the deliverance of the human race. Hence, the allusion in the Canticles, "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising?" She is to usher in the "Sun of Justice", Who is to bring such blessings to mankind.

5. Her Divine Maternity a mystery no less incomprehensible than is the Incarnation of her Son.

By it she is raised incomparably above all other creatures, and is made co-operator of the Redemption of the human race.

6. Ardent expressions of admiration of Mary by the Fathers of the Church.

7. Appeal.

1. According to the remark of a famous writer,* the greatest privilege of Mary next after her Divine Maternity is that of her Immaculate Conception.

*Canon Sheahan.

If this be so, then her greatest feast next after the Annunciation is this that we are celebrating.

To us Americans this festival has a special significance, by reason of the fact that the church of the United States has, by a solemn act of our clergy and people and with the cordial sanction of the Holy See, been placed under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin with this most beautiful of her titles. This gives me occasion to address you today on the important subject of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

2. And first, what are Mary's claims to our devotion —to that singular reverence, love, and confidence, in which she is held by all who worthily bear the name of Catholic?

Mary is worthy of our devotion, first of all, by reason of the greatness of her graces, and of her dignity in the hierarchy of beings.

After Almighty God and the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ there is no being so great as Mary. It is true, she is a pure creature, and, therefore, far and away beneath the Supreme Being. But she is a creature so holy, so perfect, that she is incomparably superior to all other creatures. She is above, not only patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, and martyrs, but she is above angels, and archangels, and thrones, and dominations, and cherubim, and seraphim, and she stands alone on a pinnacle of greatness and perfection far in advance of the rest of creatures.

3. This greatness of Mary commenced at the first instant of her existence with the privilege of her Immaculate Conception.

At that moment she was "full of grace," and her soul was endowed with all celestial gifts, the most precious and noble. She possessed a perfect faith, a firm hope,

an ardent charity, a profound humility, a purity superior to that of the angels. It was of her the prophet sang when he said that her beginnings, "her foundations were laid on the holy mountains." No stain of original sin ever sullied the purity of her soul, and it was this particular privilege that separated Mary from all the rest of the children of Adam. She was the sole one who was exempt from the universal curse that had fallen on the whole human race; and that might be said of her which king Asseurus said to his dear Esther: "This law was made for all others but not for thee."

Mary, according to the interpretation of the Fathers of the Church, is that mysterious cloud seen by the prophet Elias which "though it rose out of the sea, yet had contracted none of the bitterness of its waters." "She is a rose sprung from a thorny stem." "The Lord possessed her in the beginning of her ways," as the Church sings of her, and "she was never under the power of the serpent," whose head she came to crush in giving a Redeemer to the world.

Hence the Spouse in the Canticles seems never wearied in singing the praises of her charms. "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee." "As the lily among the thorns; so is my love among the daughters . . ." "How beautiful thou art, my love; how beautiful thou art! Thy cheeks are fair as the turtle dove's; thy neck as jewels. Thy voice is sweet, thy face is comely." "One is my love, my perfect one is but one." "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, brilliant as the sun, terrible as an army in battle array. The daughters of Zion saw her and called her blest, and the queens declared her praises, and as the days of spring they

shed around her flowers of roses and lilies of the valleys."

4. But illustrious as was the Immaculate Conception of Mary, her birth was an event no less illustrious.

I could recount many glorious circumstances in connection with Mary's coming into the world. I could say that she was great according to worldly notions; since she was descended from men the most renowned in all antiquity—since she counted among her ancestors patriarchs, and prophets, and chiefs of the people of God, and kings of the ancient law. But let me confine myself to supernatural advantages only, and say that her birth was a prodigy of the power of God where nature performed only a secondary part. It was from a sterile mother, and one, moreover, beyond the age of childbearing, through the miraculous intervention of God that this incomparable Virgin sprung. Her birth was represented beforehand by many figures, announced by prophets, desired for many ages by the human race, and demanded with much ardor.

Her's was a birth awaited as the near sign of the deliverance of the human race. And it was this expectation that induced the Church to regard Mary as the rising dawn—a very natural comparison. For, as the dawn precedes and announces the coming of the sun, dissipates the darkness of the night, drives away wild beasts, consoles the sick and rejoices all nature; so Mary went before and announced Jesus Christ, "the Sun of Justice," Who dissipated the darkness of the world by the light of His Gospel, chased away the wild beasts: that is to say, the devils, consoled and cured the spiritually and corporally sick, and brought an abundance of graces and blessings to the whole world.

5. But let me come to the crowning point—the su-

preme degree in Mary's greatness. This is Her Divine Maternity, which was the source and principle the cause and end of all her glory. Here it is that our thoughts lose themselves in admiration. Here it is that we come upon an ocean and an abyss where the mind of man sees nothing. And it is true to say that the Maternity of the most blessed Virgin is a mystery no less incomprehensible than is the Incarnation of her Son. In fact, Mary by that great and prodigious event, became the Mother of a Son, Almighty, eternal, immense, infinite in all perfections; of a Son Who possesses the same Divinity as the Father and the Holy Ghost. By it she contracted a most strict alliance with the adorable Trinity; being made the daughter of the Father, the Mother of the Son, the Spouse of the Holy Ghost. By it she acquired a maternal superiority over Him Who is "King of kings, and Lord of lords." By it she contained in her bosom Him in Whom are contained "all things visible and invisible." By it she became a Mother without ceasing to be a Virgin, and her happy fecundity only consecrated and increased her purity.

By it she sees herself raised incomparably above all the saints and all the elect of God; above angels and archangels; above thrones and dominations; above principalities, and powers, and virtues, and cherubim, and seraphim. For she acknowledges above her only the God-head and the Sacred Humanity of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

By this admirable Maternity she is become co-operator in the Redemption of the human race. For, it was she who nourished and prepared the holy Victim Who was offered to the Eternal Father in expiation of our sins. From her were derived the Precious Blood which was

shed upon the cross for our salvation, and the Adorable Body which after having been made the price of our Redemption is become the nourishment of our souls in the Holy Eucharist.

6. See to what a heighth of glory Mary is raised by the mystery of the Divine Maternity. The Fathers of the Church, considering this supreme greatness, seem lost for words to express their thoughts; and even the Church cannot find terms strong enough to express her admiration.

She says in the words of the Canticles that she is "chosen as the sun"; "comely as Jerusalem"; "the perfect one of the Beloved."

She assures us that Mary is the Woman whom St. John saw in heaven, "clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." She calls her a "Mirror of Justice," a "Seat of Wisdom," a "Vessel of honor of inestimable value"; "the Ark of the Covenant," "the Gate of heaven;" "our life, our sweetness, and our hope."

O dearly beloved, let us cultivate a lifelong and tender devotion to Mary who is thus the honor of our race and the beloved of her God. Let this devotion be manifested at all times by a loyal service offered her, but especially on her festivals such as this; that so, we may render ourselves worthy of her love and patronage, and merit the approval of our God to Whom she is so dear.

CLAIMS OF MARY TO OUR DEVOTION.

SECOND DISCOURSE: HER POWER WITH GOD.

1. To Mary's greatness corresponds perfectly her power. This power is founded on the alliance which she contracted by her Maternity with the three Persons of the blessed Trinity.

2. Our Lord is bound not only by His goodness and liberality, but also by His justice, to refuse nothing to Mary. First reason, what she is to Him—His Mother; and second, what she has done for Him—in His Infancy and Childhood, in His youth and public life, in His Passion and Death.

3. What the Fathers of the Church say of Mary's power—the Mediatrix between God and man—the Co-operator of the Redemption—the channel of God's graces from God to man; it is morally impossible for a true servant of Mary to perish.

1. To Mary's greatness corresponds perfectly her power. This power is founded on the alliance which she contracted, by her Maternity, with the three Persons of the blessed Trinity. By this alliance, I have said, she is become the Daughter of the Eternal Father, the Mother of the Son, the Spouse of the Holy Ghost.

If the mother, the daughter or the wife of an earthly monarch has such power in the state, what must not Mary's power be with God? If king Assuerus commanded Esther, his dear spouse, to ask of him whatsoever she desired, adding that nothing would be refused her, even if she should ask the half of his kingdom; if Bethsabee, the mother of Solomon, on entering into his council-chamber to ask a favor of him was saluted by him with profound respect; if he came down from his throne to meet her and had her seated on a throne beside his own; what can we think of the power that Mary has with God?

She is the Mother, the Daughter, the Spouse, not of a mere potentate of this world. She is the Daughter of the Almighty Father, the Creator and preserver of all

things. She is the Mother of Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, the Saviour of the world. She is the Spouse of the Holy Ghost, Who is God alike with the Father and the Son. Can she not then say with some proportion what her adorable Son said to his Apostles on the eve of His departure from this world: "All power is given Me, in heaven and on earth."

I do not mean to say that the power of the Blessed Virgin is infinite as that of our blessed Saviour is. I know that it is limited, relative, dependent; but I know also that it is very great and beyond all that we can conceive. For, if God grants, even in this life, so great power to His servants; if they have the keys of life and death in their hands, so to speak; if they command nature, and nature, like a willing child, obeys them; if they restore sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, life even to those slumbering in the tomb; if the Saviour tells us in the Gospel that those who shall have a firm faith will perform miracles as great as those that He Himself performed, and even greater ones; what can we think of the power that He grants to His most holy Mother whom He loves incomparably more than all the saints, and who by her greatness and her merits surpasses them beyond all that we can conceive?

2. Besides, it can be said that our Lord is bound, not only by His goodness and liberality, but also by His justice, to refuse nothing to Mary by reason of what she is to him, and of what she has done for Him. What is Mary to Him? She is truly His Mother. It was she who contributed the pure and holy matter out of which His sacred Body was formed. And when the Saviour contemplates His Sacred Humanity today seated on the throne of the God-

head - that Humanity, the instrument of so much glory to Him, the medium of His triumphs over death and hell, and the object of the everlasting adorations of the saints; how is He not filled with gratitude to her who contributed by her Maternity to that glory? He is then her true Son, and in this quality what does He not owe her?

But what has not this good Mother done and suffered for Him? She bore Him for nine months in her virginal bosom with infinite reverence and precaution. She nourished Him from "her fountains filled from heaven." She procured for Him all necessaries of life during His infancy and early Childhood. When His life was sought by a cruel king, it was she who took him at dead of night and fled to a far off country, there to draw out months, perhaps years of exile and hardship for His dear sake. How did she not press Him to her heart when a Child and imprint on His forehead a thousand kisses as her only Love. When growing up she took Him on her lap and taught Him the Eternal Wisdom, His first lessons of Childhood. She raised His infant hands in prayer to the Eternal Father—those hands that were, one day, to be lifted on the Cross for the Redemption of the world.

It was she whose tender soul was pierced with the sword of grief as she sought Him during His three days' absence in the temple. It was she who followed Him faithfully and ministered to Him during the three years of His public ministry. What shall I say? She was with Him in spirit throughout the mournful agony in the Garden of Gethsemani, the one support that earth or heaven offered Him in that dreadful hour when His Father "laid on Him the iniquities of us all." She was present in Pilate's hall when His inhuman executioners lashed Him till His Blood bespattered the pave-

ments of that court of iniquity. She followed Him on the road to Calvary and supported Him in His sufferings by her sympathy.

And, when, at last, the ever memorable tragedy was drawing to a close, the Gospel takes care to tell us that "beneath the Cross stood Mary, the Mother of Jesus," to receive His last sigh and die with Him by the violence of her sympathetic agony.

O yes, dear Mother! Mother of the Man-God! He alone can understand the ardent love that burned in your bosom. He alone can fathom the depths of those mysterious sorrows that surged in your capacious heart throughout the dreadful period of His Passion. He alone can know fully all that you did and suffered for His sake during the course of His most holy life.

And can this tender and generous Son prove unmindful of all those sacrifices made for His sake? Being infinitely liberal, what does He not do to make a return to this good Mother, aye, a return which is in some manner without limits?

O my brethren, words fail me here, and all I can say is that the power of Mary with her Son is above all that we can imagine or conceive.

3. What do not the Fathers of the Church tell us on this subject? Sometimes they style Mary the Mediatrix between God and man. It is not, indeed, that she exercises this great quality in the same sense as did Jesus Christ, her adorable Son. For He alone is the Mediator of our Redemption, Who purchased us from the power of the devil at the cost of His precious life.

But, Mary is the Mediator of intercession, who, by her prayers and influence with her Son, obtains for us whatever she asks. For, as St. Bernard remarks, "We have need of a mediator with the Mediator Jesus Christ,

Whose sympathies, being God, are all divine." And He, our God, being a "consuming fire," according to the words of Scripture; Mary intercedes by her gentle influence and screens us poor sinners from the scorching wrath of the God-head.

At other times they say that she is the Co-operator of the Redemption, because she furnished the Precious Blood which was shed for the Redemption of the human race, and she nourished and prepared the holy Victim who was immolated on the Cross for the expiation of our sins.

Again, they assure us that she is the channel of all graces, and that her Son grants them ordinarily through her. Hence, is she compared to the neck. For, as it is through the neck that all life descends from the head to the body; so we who are the mystical body of which Jesus Christ is the Head, receive life, the supernatural life of our souls, only through the medium of Mary.

Again, they assure us that it is morally impossible for a true servant of Mary to perish. You all remember; yes, and I assume you all repeat, many times a day, the lovely prayer of St. Bernard which is given in all your prayer books: "Remember O most pious Virgin, that it has never been heard of in any age that those who have had recourse to thy powerful protection were ever abandoned by thee." Mary is then all powerful with God, and there is no resisting the force of her intercession.

CLAIMS OF MARY TO OUR DEVOTION.

THIRD DISCOURSE: HER LOVE FOR US.

1. To Mary's greatness and power there is added a third claim to our reverence and devotion; and that is, her love for us. Her's is a mother's love; since in travail and sorrow we were made her children as she stood by the Cross of Calvary. This love of Mary for us is intensified as she sees us poor, afflicted beings, exposed to a thousand dangers; and in evident danger of perishing.

2. The continual proofs of Mary's love for us enumerated from the beginning of Christianity. Our own personal experience of Mary's love for us, appealed to.

3. Conclusion -To honor Mary with profound respect, devotion and confidence, St. Bernard's grand appeal.

1. But to her greatness and power there is added a third claim on our reverence and devotion; and this is her love for us which makes her employ the one and the other solely in favor of us her children. Yes, Mary loves us dearly; for, indeed, we cost her a great deal, and we were made her children in the most favorable conjuncture that ever was. For, whilst standing at the foot of the Cross on which her Jesus was transfixed, the dying Saviour commended us all to her in the person of St. John, saying: "Woman, behold thy son." And in that same eventful hour He made known to us our future relations to her, when, turning to the beloved disciple, He addressed him, saying: "behold thy Mother." What sentiments of love, esteem, and veneration ought not those last words of the dying Saviour, addressed to each of us, inspire us with towards this tenderest of Mothers, and how ought we not look up to her with sentiments of filial piety and confidence? And what impression did they not make on her who loved us so much already, and who sacrificed so much for our

sakes, even to the giving her Jesus to the death of Calvary to purchase us to life? And what must not be her eagerness to succor us when she sees us poor, afflicted beings, exposed to a thousand dangers, and in evident danger of perishing? Yes, Mary has an inconceivable tenderness for us. Her goodness is unequalled. She breathes only mercy.

2. But what continual proofs of her love and protection have we not? and this is the last argument I shall adduce in proof of the gratitude, respect, and devotion we owe her.

How many prodigies has she not wrought in our favor in all times and places since the beginning of the Church? How many sick and infirm cured? How many blind restored to sight? How many dead restored to life? How many sad accidents averted? How many public calamities arrested? And must we not agree that it is her powerful mediation before God that withholds His avenging arm from chastising sinners as they deserve? Without her powerful protection, how could the world subsist, flooded as it is with crimes? How many spiritual favors does she not obtain every day for those who are devoted to her? How many great sinners converted? How many just sustained in good practices? How many of every age and sex and condition who have attained salvation through her means? Ah, if each one of us reflects, how many graces spiritual and temporal will he not recollect to have received through the intercession of this best of Mothers?

3. Let us therefore honor Mary with profound respect and devotion, and look up to her for protection on all occasions of trial and danger. And, Oh, when temptation is nigh, and ruin threatens us on all sides; let us cry to her for help, nor cease our petitions till she mercifully de-

liver us. For, Mary is indeed the ark of salvation to all, the one guiding star of life set over the stormy sea of this world to guide us poor tempest-tossed mariners to the port of salvation. And it is in this guise she is saluted by the saints and by the Church, as we read in her offices. "O all you," says St. Bernard, "who perceive yourselves tossed on the turbid ocean of this world amidst storms and tempests; turn not away your eyes from the shining of this star, if you would not be overwhelmed in its awful billows. If the winds of temptation arise; if you encounter the rocks of tribulation; turn to this star; call upon Mary. If you are cast upon the waves of pride; if of envy; if of ambition; look to the star; call upon Mary. If gusts of anger, or sensual passion strike against the frail bark of your soul; turn to Mary. If you are horrified at the enormity of your crimes; if you are confounded at the filth of your conscience; if you begin to fall into the abyss of despair; if you are terrified at the thought of judgment; think of Mary; call upon Mary. Let her name not depart from your mouth, nor her thought from your heart; and that you may obtain the fruit of your prayers; try to copy her virtues. Following her, you will not go astray. Praying to her, you will not despair; accompanying her, you will not fail; under her protection you must succeed; so that each one may know by his own experience how efficacious to all is devotion to Mary.

THE TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY HOUSE OF LORETO.

HISTORY OF.

1. In the feast of today we are shown the jealous providence of God in favor of those things that are consecrated to His service. The Holy House is that in which the Holy Family lived. It had been a possession of the ancestors of Mary—consecrated by the mystery of the Incarnation and by the sublime lives of the Holy Family that were lived therein.

2. The Holy House became early a place of devotion for the first Christians. It was changed into a chapel where the Sacred Mysteries were daily celebrated.

3. Phenomenal growth of the Saracen empire. Judea, like all the eastern provinces of the Roman empire, became the prey of the infidels. In the universal ruin brought about by the barbarians God, Who had miraculously guarded the Holy House for thirteen centuries, again came to its rescue. The miracle of its translation, first to Tersato, in Dalmatia, then to Loreto, where it remains to this day.

4. For six centuries the Holy House has been to Italy what for thirteen centuries it had been to Judea—a place of pilgrimage for the whole world.

5. It was to thank God for this great manifestation of His goodness to mankind, as well as to honor the abode of Jesus and His blessed Mother, and to increase devotion to it, that the Church gave a place in its calendar to the feast of the Translation. It is a feast in which the Church gives particular honor to Mary by reason of her special connection with the holy place.

6. Appeal—To enter into the spirit of the feast—the indirect objects of such veneration are those august acts which circle round the mystery that brought salvation to the world.

A further thought that the solemnity of the day calls up is the reverence that is due to the holy places where the same Word Incarnate today deigns to dwell.

1. The feast that we celebrate today—the feast of the Holy House of Loreto—is one that brings home to us in a striking manner the jealous providence of God in

favor of those things that are consecrated to His service.

This House is, as you are aware, the one in which the Holy Family lived during the thirty years of our Lord's sojourn at Nazareth. From time immemorial the little property on which the Holy House stood was in the possession of the ancestors of Mary. And after she was espoused to St. Joseph she returned with him to that home of her birth and early childhood. There in that sanctuary of innocence and virtue was conceived the Word Incarnate. There the Child Jesus grew into the fulness of Manhood. There He lived the model life of obedience, labor, and prayer, which the evangelist makes mention of, and in the practice of which "He grew in wisdom and grace before God and man."

And now, when the time came that our blessed Redeemer should go forth on His apostolic mission, and that Mary also should quit her life of privacy and follow Him in His journeyings and preachings, the Almighty willed that the holy edifice should be preserved from ruin. To this effect He sent His protecting angels to guard and preserve it, as well from the wasting hand of time, as from the ravages of that no less ruthless spoiler, man.

2. A wonderful history indeed has had the Holy House, and one that brings out in bold relief the power of God's protecting providence.

We are told that after the departure of our Lord and his blessed Mother to Heaven, the Holy House of Nazareth became a place of devotion for the Christians of Judea. Its presence amongst them told of the greatest mystery accomplished by the Almighty in favor of mankind. And the remembrance of this mystery, while the

proofs of our Lord's Divinity were still fresh in their minds, made the faithful flock to it as to a sanctuary the most venerable on the whole earth. The holy edifice was changed into a chapel in which the Sacred Mysteries were daily celebrated, and numberless were the graces in favor of soul and body obtained from God in return for their veneration to it.

For many centuries the Holy House continued to be a place of pilgrimage for the devout of all nations, and by means of its preservation and presence on earth great was the honor accorded to the mystery of the Incarnation; great was the devotion excited in the hearts of the faithful towards the holy Personages who formerly dwelt under its protecting shade.

3. But at length a time came of trial and desolation for the Church of God; a time of suffering and persecution. The successors of Mahomet, the famous impostor of Arabia, relying, like him, on the power of the sword for the spread of their false religion, carried desolation into all the countries of the East. Province after province fell before the terrific shock of their fanatic valour. Neither powerful armies in the field, nor the strength of walled cities, could withstand a heroism that seemed sustained by a power more than human. In less than a century after the rise of Mahomet, the caliph of Bagdad, the chief of the false religion, ruled over a territory more extensive than that which at any time acknowledged the sway of Persia, or Greece, or Rome; and it seemed as if the whole human race must soon succumb to the great antichrist, who gave but one alternative to the edge of the sword, the adoption of the religion of the prophet.

Judea, like all the Eastern provinces of the Roman empire, became the prey of the mighty conqueror. The

holy places of Jerusalem were desecrated; churches and monasteries were wrapped in flames; their holy inmates were slaughtered. Shall the Holy House sanctified by the mystery of the Incarnation, whose hallowed walls heard the whisperings of the prayer of Jesus and Mary, suffer the fate of the other sanctuaries? Oh, no! God Who miraculously guarded it for thirteen hundred years will not now abandon it to the rapacity of an infidel horde. Behold, then, a miracle the most astonishing, yet one of the best-attested in all history. On a certain day the inhabitants of Tersato, in Dalmatia, a country to the east of the Venetian Sea, beheld with wonder and amazement a whole edifice raised aloft in mid-air and wafted in a westerly direction, as if fanned by angels' wings, till at last it was seen to descend gently and settle in their midst. It was none other than the Holy House of Nazareth, which had been transported thither by divine power from Judea, now overrun by the armies of the infidels.

Great was their joy and gratitude to God for the favor of selecting their country as the resting place of the sacred edifice. Its presence amongst them was a pledge of God's favor. For two years the Holy House remained in the kingdom of Dalmatia, and its presence brought benediction to the whole country.

But not yet was there an end to its journeyings; and it came to pass that again it was raised aloft and borne across the Adriatic Sea to the neighboring shores of Italy, and was transported to Loreto, where it remains to this day.

For six centuries the Holy House of Loreto has been to Italy what it had been for the thirteen preceding centuries to Judea—a place of pilgrimage for the whole world. Tens of thousands of devout pilgrims come

from all quarters of Christendom to worship God in the place consecrated by our Lord's presence and by that of His holy parents. Great favors have been obtained from Heaven, not only by those who have had the privilege of visiting the holy place, but also by those who have had devotion to it.

5. And it was to thank God for this great manifestation of His goodness to mankind, as well as to honor the abode of Jesus Christ and His blessed Mother, and to increase devotion to it, that the Church gave a place in its calendar to the Feast of the Translation. This is the feast we celebrate—the Feast of the Translation, as it is called, of the Holy House of Loreto. It is one on which the Church gives particular honor to Mary. For there in the house of her virtuous parents she first saw the light—there, through her, the Word of God became Incarnate—there, she carried Him in her sacred womb which was His first abode on earth—there she nursed Him on her lap and fed him from "her fountains filled from Heaven." And many a time when Jesus was on the mountainside preaching to the multitudes, or teaching in the synagogue of some distant city, Mary retired to her holy home and assisted Him powerfully by her prayers.

Today her litanies are chanted in solemn cadance by the multitudes of devout pilgrims who frequent the grand basilica that overshadows the Holy House. The spacious aisles resound to the praise of Mary. And many a devout tear moistens the floor sanctified by the footprints of Jesus and Mary; many a fervent kiss is imprinted on those walls which sheltered the most august Personages the earth had borne.

6. Let us also, dear brethren, as becomes devout children of the Church, enter into the spirit of this feast,

and honor by our devotion what God has willed to honor. And whilst we honor the Holy House of Loreto, let us remember that the indirect objects of our veneration are no other than those august acts which circle round the mystery that brought salvation to the world. Yes, the Incarnation of the Word—the divine presence of the Son of God—the virtues, the divine life, the holy example of Jesus—the treasury of virtues acquired for the human race within its walls—the prayers, the holy example, the splendid virtues of Mary and Joseph—the illustrious example of family life given to after ages by the Holy Family during the thirty years that they inhabited it. All these are the objects of our veneration as we today thank God for its preservation amongst us.

There is just another thought that the solemnity of this day calls up, and it is the reverence that is due to the holy places where the same Word Incarnate today deigns to dwell. Yes, holy sanctuaries of religion; churches of the living God, in which Jesus Christ lives a sacramental life; holy altars on which the Immaculate Victim is daily sacrificed, you demand our worship. You call aloud to us to enter your holy precincts with reverential fear. Whilst, therefore, we today reverence the holy dwelling place of Jesus and Mary, may we learn to honor you by our reverence and devotion. May we be permitted to assist devoutly at the great Sacrifice which is accomplished daily within your walls. May we have the privilege of holding frequent colloquies with the Divine Presence Who reigns therein; and may our souls become in turn the sanctuaries of that Sacred Flesh assumed by the Word of God in the holy sanctuary of Loreto.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

THE NATIVITY—A MEDITATION.

"And it came to pass that when they were there her (Mary's) days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born Son and wrapped Him up in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

"And there were in the same country shepherds watching and keeping the night watches over their flock; and behold an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them and they feared with a great fear.

"And the angel said to them: 'Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy that shall be to all the people; for this day is born to you a Saviour, Who is Christ, the Lord in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger.'

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.'"—Luke ii., 6-14.

1. This mystery of the Nativity seems to be the most touching, amiable, and soul-inspiring of all the mysteries that are proposed for our veneration during the course of the year. But simple and touching as are the circumstances that surround the birth of the Saviour, the contemplation of the event raises us at once to the sublimest thoughts that can occupy the mind of man, and there is disclosed underlying this event a triple mystery.

2. First, in the eternal generation of the Word in the mind of God the Father. The conception of this tremendous mystery must not be lost sight of in the contemplation of His lowly birth in the stable of Bethlehem. The splendors of His Eternal Generation He knows how to preserve; for, in becoming Man He ceases not to be God. And these splendors He, through His Incarnation, comes to reveal to the world. The ancient world was wholly ignorant of the mystery of the Trinity, and of the quality of the Saviour Whom all nations were expecting; as it likewise erred in its conception of the nature of the Redemption He was destined to accomplish.

3. Second, in the temporal birth of the Man-God in Bethlehem. The touching circumstances of this temporal birth must

not make us forget the benefits He comes to confer on us, and which are the outcome of His love for us. First, through His temporal birth Jesus Christ is made our Brother. God and Man will henceforth form but one Person; second, through the same birth we are given in Him a Saviour, and the Physician of our souls; third, and lastly, by it we are given a Master and the Model of our lives.

4. That these benefits be of avail to us, we must allow Him to be spiritually born in our hearts by grace, which is the ulterior object of His temporal birth. The conditions of this spiritual birth in our hearts are portrayed in the mystery of His Nativity. These are, that we practise purity and humility; silence and retirement; poverty, obedience, and mortification. While the classes that represented the opposite vices were passed over by the Son of God, the shepherds alone, with Mary and Joseph were admitted to His crib in the stable of Bethlehem.

1. This mystery of the Nativity of our blessed Lord seems to be the most human of all the mysteries proposed for our veneration during the course of the year. It is the one that touches most profoundly our feelings and sympathies as men. For, what more touching than the spectacle of a God coming amongst us in the form of a little Child and stretching forth His little hands for help to creatures such as we? What more amiable than the sight of a God Saviour hiding His Divinity under the rags and swathing bands of babyhood? What more soul-inspiring than the thought of angelic choirs making musical the midnight air and shrouding the heavens in glory as they come to bid poor shepherd boys to worship at the cradle of the new born "King of the Jews?"

But simple and touching as are the circumstances that surround the birth of the Saviour, the contemplation of this event raises us at once to the sublimest thoughts that can occupy the mind of man; and there is disclosed to us underlying this event a triple mystery: in the Eternal Generation of the Word in the mind of God the

Father—in the temporal birth of the Man-God in the stable of Bethlehem and in the spiritual birth of the same Saviour in our hearts by grace, which is the complement and the term of His temporal birth and sojourn amongst us.

2. The evangelist, St. Luke, narrates in touching language the mystery of the temporal birth of the Son of God; but the mystery of His Eternal Generation, "who shall narrate," says the prophet, and what intellect of creature shall conceive?

Mary indeed, wholly occupied with her own lowliness and unworthiness, conceives and gives birth to Him in time. The Eternal Father, all occupied with His own infinite greatness, contemplating and fully comprehending His Godhead, conceives His consubstantial and coeternal Son—a Son equal to Him in all things "the brightness of His glory" "the express image of His substance"—"God sprung from God—Light produced from essential Light true God begotten of true God. Begotten, not made." Oh, let us adore this ineffable mystery, hidden in the bosom of the Father from all ages, made known to us in the fulness of time through the ministry of His Son!

We must not, then, in the contemplation of the temporal birth of the Word, lose sight of the splendors of his Eternal Generation- splendors which He has known how to preserve; for while assuming what He was not, He ceases not to be what He was- for, in becoming like to man, He ceases not to be equal to God splendors which, through His Incarnation, He comes to reveal to the world.

Before the Incarnation what was known of this mystery? What was known of the mystery of the Trinity the greatest, the most inscrutable of mysteries, and

the foundation of all others? Nothing. The ancient world was wholly ignorant of the fecundity of the Godhead, and the quality of the Saviour Whom all nations were expecting; as it likewise erred in its conception of the nature of the Redemption He was destined to effect for men. To Jesus Christ it belongs to conduct us to the source of the life He draws from the bosom of His Father, and to reveal to the world the mystery of the Trinity, hitherto unknown to men.

3. Neither must we, while occupied with the touching circumstances of His temporal birth, forget the benefits He comes to confer on us -benefits worthy of a Man-God--benefits which are the outcome of the love of the Eternal Father, and which are so beautifully referred to by the Apostle of love: "God so loved the world that He gave for its Redemption His only Son."

Is it not, in fact, through the temporal birth of Jesus Christ that we are given in Him a Brother, and one "like to us in all things, save sin"? What an honor to the human race, and what an advantage, this new relationship we enter on with the Godhead! By it the oracle is reversed. When God of old saw the first man clothed in the skins of beasts which He gave him to cover the shame to which his folly had reduced him, He cried out in derision of the father of the human race, "Behold, Adam is become as one of us!" Now we can truly say, when we look upon Jesus Christ clothed in the lowliness of our flesh, "Behold the Second Adam is become as one of us." God and Man will henceforth form but one Person, since the Son of God has espoused human nature as His Bride.

Through the temporal birth of the Son of God we are given a Saviour and a Physician who comes to heal our many wounds. "Man," says St. Augustine, "was

sick, but he neither sought for, nor even desired a physician. What does Jesus Christ? He offers Himself to us in our needs. And Oh, remedy unknown! He became sick Himself in order to cure us. He took it upon Himself to bear the stroke of His Father's anger which we deserved. "He who knew no sin Himself is made the Victim of atonement for our sins."

Through the temporal birth of Jesus Christ we are given, finally, a Model and a Master Who comes to teach us to reform our lives. Before the coming of Jesus Christ the way to Heaven was abandoned and almost unknown; the virtues that conduct to it were despised. Jesus Christ came to teach His people this unknown science of salvation, and His own example must be their instruction. The stable, the crib, His rags and tears appeal to us and speak to us more eloquently than words.

4. But in order that He may conduct us to our eternal end we must, first of all, allow Him to be born spiritually in our hearts by grace, which is the ulterior object of His temporal birth. The devil, through sin, had usurped possession of the human heart. Jesus Christ comes to chase him thence, and to establish therein His eternal reign. If we close the entrance to our hearts against Him, it were for our misfortune that He was born. Mary herself, His most holy Mother, is more happy in having carried Him in her heart by grace than in having borne Him in her chaste womb. And we, if we would hereafter enjoy His glory in Heaven, must, while here on earth, share a joy like hers.

The conditions, moreover, of His spiritual birth are clearly portrayed in the mystery of His Nativity. It is purity and humility alone that are able to attract Him to the earth. It is in silence and solitude, far away from

the turmoil of the world, in the actual exercise of obedience, that He wishes to be born. It is in the midst of poverty and mortification that He sets His throne. Let us not hope that He will form Himself otherwise in our hearts. He comes to live with us only under the conditions that He loves; and pride, and impurity, and worldly turmoil and ambition, repel Him far. Thus it was in the circumstances of His temporal birth, and thus it must be to the end.

While, therefore, the proud, the impure the ambitious, and the wordly-minded, represented in the different classes who that day thronged the temple, and the streets, and the palaces of Jerusalem, are passed over by the Son of God; the shepherds alone, with Mary and Joseph, are admitted to His crib. For they already carry in their hearts the Divine Infant Whom they come to adore.

As the fruit of this meditation let us with reverent hearts adore amid the humble surroundings of the crib of Bethlehem the splendors of the Eternal Generation of the Word. Let us acknowledge with grateful hearts the goodness of Jesus Christ become for us in His birth, our Brother, our Model, our Saviour.

Let us practise the virtues that He loved—humility, self-denial, purity, obedience, silence, love; that so He may be born in our hearts by grace Whose happy birth we commemorate amid the joys of the Christmas festival.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

THE NAME OF JESUS.

"After eight days were accomplished that the Child should be circumcised, His name was called Jesus, which was called by the angel before He was conceived in the womb."—Luke ii., 21.

1. Introduction—The conferring of a name by which the future man or woman will be known through life has been looked on as a joyful event in all times and among all peoples; much more so in the event of the conferring of a temporal name to the Messias. And what a name? One first given Him from heaven, the great name of Jesus.

2. Scripture furnishes us with examples of men who have been called by this name, even, we are to believe, by the design of God Himself. But it is none the less proper to the Son of God Incarnate. And this, because He alone has fulfilled the office which it signifies in all the extent of its signification.

3. The title of Saviour which the name signifies could belong only to a Man-God, since none other than a Man-God could save us from the desperate state in which we were. By original sin the gates of heaven were closed against us, and by our personal sin the greater part of the human race deserved hell. Mortal sin an infinite offense against God. No finite being, whether man or angel, could atone for it. Neither could God as God atone for the offense. In the emergency God's wisdom and power provides a Man God who will suffer punishment in the place of all men and the human race will be saved.

We learn from the greatness of the remedy, the depth of our wounds; and from the magnificence of the gift, the liberality of the Giver.

4. Not like others who sometimes assume to themselves the most high-sounding names which they do not merit; our Lord merited His on the most legitimate of titles. He wished to purchase it at the price of His sufferings and death; and this the more, in order to strengthen our confidence in Him. This we see in the purpose which actuated Him in all His great works as Man. To reward Him "God gave Him a Name that is above every name."

5. Amplification.

6. Appeal.

1. The festival of the Circumcision is one that is celebrated throughout the Church with great joy and solemnity. And this not only because of the new year that has begun, but, still more, because of the auspicious event that it commemorates.

Dearly beloved, the christening of a child, or, to put it in a more general form, the conferring of a name by which the future man or woman is to be known through life, has been looked on as a joyful event at all times and among all peoples. And this, because, amongst other reasons, the little mite that is carried in the arms of its nurse adds another member to the beadroll of the family; and its career in life is looked forward to as about to increase that family's credit and influence before men. And if the occasion of the conferring of a name be one of joy with respect to the little mite that only a while ago was a "child of wrath," and whose future may be cursed and blighted by crime; what joy and gratitude should not the present excite in us, when the event which we commemorate is none other than the giving of a temporal name to our God to the long promised Messias at Whose coming "all the nations of the earth should be blessed"?

And what a name! Not such as is given to a poor child of man; but a name of destiny, and one which was first given Him from heaven- the name of "Jesus," so sweet to the lips and to the heart, the only source of hope to the sin laden peoples. The present is a fitting occasion, then, to study the mysteries of the Sacred Name.

2. Now, I avow that the Son of God is not the only one who has been called by his beautiful name of Jesus. Scripture furnishes us with several examples of men

who have been so called, even, we are led to believe, by the design of God Himself.

Thus, Joseph, the saviour of Egypt; Josua, who led the Israelites into the promised land; the high priest, the son of Josedeck, who led the people of God back from the captivity of Babylon; the author of the inspired book of Ecclesiasticus; all these have been honored with it.

But this divine Name is none the less proper to the Son of God Incarnate. For He alone has merited it. He alone has fulfilled the office which It signifies in all the extent of Its signification. To Him alone, therefore, It by right belongs. And if by a particular direction of God It has been given to others, It cannot belong to them, and they could bear it only as figures of Jesus Christ, Himself.

3. In fact the glorious title of Saviour, which this name signifies, could belong only to a Man-God; since no other than a Man-God could save us from the desperate state in which we were. For you must remember that by reason of our first parents' sin the whole human race was deprived of original justice, which was our sole claim to Divine favor, and we were condemned to perpetual banishment from the face of God. Through original sin we all came into the world "children of wrath"; and to this first estrangement from God, we ourselves added many personal sins which merited for us the chastisement of hell.

Such being our condition, the justice of God demanded that, before pardoning us, full atonement be made to His offended Majesty.*

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*This was God's chosen method of bringing about our reparation, but He could of course have chosen other methods had He so willed.

But who was capable of making that atonement, and, as a result, of saving us from the consequences of our sin? We ourselves could not do it. We were guilty in His sight; and, as our offense was infinite, we deserved infinite punishment. We could not save ourselves, therefore; and whatever services we might offer to God were due to Him already on a thousand other titles. Not the angels—for they are finite in their being; and, therefore, finite in their merits, and incapable of making infinite atonement. Not even God Himself, as God, could make atonement to His justice, and save man from the consequences of his fall. Essentially sovereign and independent, incapable of abasing Himself in His own nature as God, He could not satisfy the claims of His offended justice. Man owed to God, therefore, a debt which only One capable of suffering an infinite punishment could pay.

But when our case appears on all sides desperate, the wisdom of God will devise, and the power of God will effect a means by which infinite atonement will be made to Divine justice on the part of man, and man will be saved from the consequences of his sin.

The wisdom and power of God will, I say, bring into existence a Man-God Who will bear the brunt of avenging justice, and Who will, through the efficacy of His humiliations and sufferings, satisfy that justice and save the human race. The Man-God will, as the Apostle argues, suffer chastisement in the place of all men; and through the infinite efficacy of His atonement the human race will be saved.

This fact shows us what kind of a Saviour we have need of, and what is this Jesus Who is given us. We should learn, then, from the greatness of the remedy, the depth of our wounds; and from the magnificence

of the gift, the liberality of the Giver. It was a Man-God Who was necessary to be our Saviour, and Whom God has given us to save us. Every other means for salvation without a God-Saviour was useless. Nature; human wisdom; the Law of Moses; the efforts of our own will; example; instruction; even the word of God; all were powerless. Hence, we see the truth of St. Peter's words: "There is no salvation through any other than Him, and there is no other Name under heaven which has been given to men by which they can be saved."

4. We sometimes meet with men who assume to themselves the most august and high sounding names, names which they do not merit, and which they can put forth no just claims to.

But when the Son of God assumes the great name of "Saviour," He does so only after having merited it on the most legitimate of titles. He wished that it be as the trophy of His victory over death and hell, and as the fruit of His conquest. It is at the price of His humiliations and sufferings and death that He wished to purchase It. And this, in order that that which has served to increase His rights might serve also to strengthen our confidence in Him. This we see in the purpose which actuated Him in all His great works as Man. Why, in fact, was He humiliated, "He Who having the form and nature of God, did not think it a usurpation to be made equal to God: why was He humiliated so far as to take the form and nature of a servant?" It was "to save us," says St. Paul. Why did He wish to become like man "in all things save sin," which He came to destroy, and which He could not commit? It was to save us. Why did He abase Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of

the cross? It was to save us. It was to form us by His example that He lived. It was to instruct us that He spoke. It was to sanctify us that He suffered. It was to redeem us that He died. And it was to crown His sufferings and humiliations, says the Apostle, that "God gave Him a Name that is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven, on earth, and in hell; and that every tongue should confess that the Lord, Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father."

5. Such is then the title upon which is founded the claim to the great Name of Jesus which belongs to the Son of God made Man for the love of man, and which belongs to Him alone. Divine Name! which cannot be pronounced with a respect worthy of God except by the motion of the Spirit of God. Sacred Name! which makes hell tremble, and which chases the devils. Name, full of power, and by the strength of which are wrought the greatest miracles! Salutary Name! from which the Sacraments of the New Law draw all their efficacy. Efficacious Name! whose infinite merit obliges the Heavenly Father to hear the prayers of men. Name, infinitely glorious for Jesus Christ! infinitely consoling to Christians! Name, which made the Saints find joy even in tribulations and glory in reproaches! Name, full of mercy, of goodness, of charity! Name, "truly admirable throughout the whole earth!" Name, sweeter than the most exquisite perfume! Name, which alone is our hope and our joy! or, as it is so beautifully expressed in the hymn of St. Bernard so often sung in our churches:

"Jesus, that Name inspires my mind
With springs of life and light;
More than I ask, in Thee I find,
And languish with delight!

"No sound, no harmony so gay,
Can art of music frame;
No thoughts can reach; no words can say
The sweets of Thy blest name."

6. Oh, let us adore, then, the sacred Name of Jesus, the Name proper to the Son of God made Man for our salvation. Let us place in It all our trust and confidence.

And, Oh when temptation hovers around us, and the atmosphere seems thick with sin, and the heavens are clouded from our sight, and the gusts of passion swell against the frail barque of our soul; let us call unceasingly on the saving Name of Jesus; and the potent voice of the Saviour will be heard amid the rattle of the storm commanding the elements of sinful passion within us, and a sweet calm will settle on our soul to tell of the ready presence of our God to save.

And since we daily share in the benefits of the Redemption He has purchased for us; let us daily return Him thanks; but especially on this feast which commemorates the conferring of His Name and the formal entrance on His office of Saviour by receiving on His Body the mark of sin -that sin that He will contend with during life, till, finally, on Calvary, He drown it in His Blood, and achieve the Redemption of the world.

THE EPIPHANY.

THE ADORATION OF THE MAJI.

"When Jesus, therefore, was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of King Herod, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East, and are come to adore Him.'"—Matt. ii., 1-12.

1. Introduction—This feast should induce in us a particular joy and gratitude, since it commemorates the conferring on us of a most precious grace, the call of the Gentiles to the true faith, and to a participation in the graces of the Saviour. The other great solemnities of the year, Easter, v. g. Pentecost, Christmas, call forth our homage and gratitude, but the events commemorated in these solemnities concerned the Jews primarily; whereas, the event commemorated today belongs to ourselves alone.

2. The word Epiphany signifies the Manifestation; and it relates to a triple manifestation of Jesus Christ to men; first, at His Baptism in the Jordan, where the Eternal Father declared Him to be His beloved Son; second, at the marriage feast of Cana, in Galilee, where He proved Himself gifted with divine power; third, and above all, to the wise men from the East, which typified the call of the Gentiles to the true religion.

3. For thousands of years the Gentile peoples had fallen away from the worship of the true God, and had become idolators; yet He kept a ray of the primeval revelation flickering among them. Moreover, He from time to time raised up prophets amongst them who announced the Messias to come. And, lastly, His providence permitted the Jews to be dispersed among them to keep alive in them a hope of the Redeemer and prepare them for their future call to the faith. Be that as it may, it is certain from the writings and traditions of all the Eastern peoples that at this time all were in expectation of a great personage who, sprung from the Jews, should rule over the whole earth, and whose coming should be a source of blessings to all mankind; hence, the inquiry of the wise men in Jerusalem.

4. The appearance of the wise men and their anxious inquiries for the new-born Saviour raised a great commotion in Jerusalem; so that at last the report reached the ears of king Herod, who sent for them and inquired "about the appearance of the star and the cause of their coming." He called together the members of the Sanhedrin, that he might learn where the

Saviour was to be born. And they at once reply, "in Bethlehem of Juda". To Bethlehem, therefore, the wise men direct their steps, and once more the faithful star goes before them, till, at last, it rests over THE HOUSE, *not,* THE STABLE—*where "they found the Child, Jesus, with Mary, His Mother".*

5. Bethlehem, the birthplace of the Saviour, is also the birthplace of our faith and hope. There, with the "Desired of nations", the "Lamb of God" Who came "to crush the serpent's head" and "to take away the sins of the world", we shall find the beginning of our faith; for, behold, the wise men "fall down and adore Him". Glorious gift of faith, which enables us to recognize under the humble "swaddling clothes" of the Babe of Bethlehem our Saviour and our God.

6. What we owe to the faith; and what it has done for the human race; and how we should prize it as the most precious of God's gifts. This conception should make us cherish it, and make us take care that ours be a living faith, that, like that of the wise men, will inspire us to the performance of good works, without which it is but inert and dead.

1. If there is any festival throughout the year that should beyond others bring us a particular joy; if there is any event recorded in Scripture the remembrance of which should fill our souls with gratitude to God; if there is any grace that we should treasure diligently and earnestly seek to profit by; that festival, that event, that grace, is the one we commemorate today, the account of which I have just read for you– namely, the call of the Gentiles to the true faith and to a participation in the graces of the Saviour.

It is true, indeed, that other great solemnities of the year—Easter, for instance, Pentecost, Christmas, have a glory peculiarly their own, and one that calls forth our homage and gratitude. But, if we consider rightly, the events commemorated in those solemnities concerned the Jews primarily. When the Saviour rose from the dead on Easter morning to whom did He reveal Himself? Was it not to the disciples, to the Magdalen, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the surrounding

country, the descendants of the patriarch Jacob? When the Holy Spirit descended on Pentecost Sunday, was it not on the same disciples that His "parted tongues of fire sat"? Was it not their minds that He enlightened? Was it not their hearts that He inflamed with the holy ardor of love? If, impelled by the same Holy Spirit, the disciples descended to the city and preached to the multitude; was it not Jews they met, and spoke to, and converted? If they spoke in all the known languages; does not this prove only the more clearly the great and distinctive gathering of Jews from all quarters of the world to the manifestation of the Holy Spirit? Even Christmas, the festival which, of all, brings joy to the Christian people, because, indeed, "a Child is born to us and a Son is given us"; does not it even belong peculiarly to the Jews? And when Christ the Saviour was born in Bethlehem, was it not to the shepherds—Jews—that the angels announced the joyful tidings?

But today we commemorate the manifestation of the Redeemer to the Gentiles and their call to the true faith after they had for ages lain in the darkness of superstition and unbelief.

2. This feast is called Epiphany, that is to say, "the Manifestation"; for on this day we commemorate a triple manifestation of Jesus Christ to men. First of all, we commemorate that great event recorded by St. Luke in the opening sentences of his gospel, wherein Jesus Christ is declared to be the Son of the Most High God and Teacher of mankind. For, as the Saviour came forth from His baptism in the Jordan, the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him; whilst, at the same time, the voice of the Heavenly Father was heard saying: "This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."

The second manifestation of Jesus Christ commemorated in this day's festival is the working of His first miracle at the marriage feast of Cana, in Gallilee. In this He showed Himself for the first time gifted with divine power. And by the changing of the water into wine He prefigured that still more wonderful miracle accomplished by Him at the Last Supper, of the changing of the substances of bread and wine into those of His most precious Body and Blood.

But the great overshadowing event commemorated in this day's festival, as handed down from the earliest days of the Church, is the call of the Gentiles to the true religion, typified in the coming of the Wise Men from the East to worship the new born Saviour at Bethlehem.

3. That you may take in the full import of this momentous event, let me remind you that it was now several thousand years since the Gentile peoples had laid aside, almost universally, the worship of the true God and began to adore gods of their own fashioning and fancy. Having fallen away from faith and hope in the One, true God, the senseless people were carried about by every blast of error, till at last they worshipped everything that came before them. They adored trees, and stones, and animals, and insects, and serpents; or, rather, to use the words of Scripture, "They worshipped devils" under the impersonation of their own passions and vices, and looked on them as the gods in whom they placed their trust.

During those long centuries God beheld with a bleeding heart the depravity of those peoples who took in the whole human race, save and except the Jews alone; and He longed for the time when He might announce to them the glad tidings of salvation through the min-

istry of His Son made Man. With this object in view, He kept a ray of the primeval revelation still flickering amongst them. Moreover, He from time to time raised up in their midst men gifted with the spirit of prophesy, who announced the Messias to come, together with the blessings that His coming should inaugurate throughout the world. And, lastly, He permitted that for some centuries before the birth of Our Lord the Jews should be dispersed among the Gentiles that they might spread amongst them the promises concerning the Messias, and prepare them for the future call to the faith.

Be that as it may, it is certain, from the writings and traditions of all peoples, that at the time of the birth of the Saviour all the nations of the earth were in expectation of the coming of a great personage Who sprung from the Jews, should rule over the whole earth, and whose coming, heralded by the appearance of a mysterious star, should be a source of blessings to mankind. And, hence, we see the Wise Men, conducted by the mysterious star, come to Jerusalem and enquire on all sides: "Where is He that is born King of the Jews; for we have seen His star in the East, and have come to adore Him?"

4. The appearance of the Wise Men and their anxious enquiries for the new born Saviour raised great commotion in Jerusalem. For, although the Jews were the depositaries of the promises made by God concerning the coming of His Son, and though they were acquainted with all the signs by which He might be known; they were as yet unaware of His presence amongst them.

The report of the arrival of the Wise Men and of their purpose reached the ears of King Herod, who sent for them and enquired, as the Gospel tells us,

"about the appearance of the star and the cause of their coming." He, being of an alien race and only imperfectly acquainted with the Scriptures, called together the Sanhedrin, or great council of the Jews, composed of the priests and ancients and doctors of the law, that he might know from them exactly where the Saviour was to be born. And they at once reply: "In Bethlehem of Juda, as foretold by the prophet." "And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, are not the least among the principalities of Juda; for, from thee shall spring the Chief who shall feed the flock of Israel, My people."

To Bethlehem, therefore, the Wise Men direct their steps; and as soon as they leave the precincts of Jerusalem the faithful star once more appears and goes before them, till at last it rests "over where the Child was" . . . "and entering into the house they found the Child with His Mother, Mary." (I beg of you to pay attention to one little word in the Gospel narrative. The evangelist says: not "that the star stood over the cave of Bethlehem," but "over where the Child Jesus was," "and entering into *the house*," not the stable. This gives us a clue to the movements of the Holy Family in the early days of the Nativity; and it is likely that that sympathy of feeling which is never wanting amongst the poor impelled some of the shepherds to invite those outcasts to partake of the hospitality of their humble home.) To this house, then the star conducts the Wise Men; and into this they enter and present their gifts and adore Him.

5. O dearly beloved, you who are also of the Gentile stock, turn your thoughts a little while today towards that poor cottage at Bethlehem. Enter in spirit with those holy men and adore. For Bethlehem, the

birthplace of the Saviour, is also the natal place of our faith and hope, and the place whence take origin all the spiritual benefits that we enjoy; enter and see that little Child, an outcast even from His birth, and dependent for shelter on the charity of the poor. That Child is the "desired of nations"; the long expected Messiah; He Who is come "to crush the serpent's head"; "the Lamb of God Who cometh to take away the sins of the world." This the Wise Men, at least, recognize Him to be. For, behold, in the words of the Gospel, "falling down they adore Him."

O glorious gift of faith which impels these Wise Men to reject the testimony of the senses and the shallow arguments of reason and to acknowledge Him as the Son of the Living God! Sublime gift of faith, which enables them to peer through the veil of sensible things behind which God works His greatest designs for the advancement of His own glory and for our good!

6. And we, my brethren, what do we not owe to faith? By faith, as by a divine sun, the thick clouds of ignorance in which we were enveloped are dissipated, and we come to the clear knowledge of divine truth. By faith, as by a mighty telescope we are enabled to peer into the regions of mystery and discover brilliant truths in the midst of the darkness in which God veils His majesty. By faith we take flight as the eagle, and soar into the ethereal realms, mingle with the choirs of blessed spirits who, on poised wing, chant the divine praises before the throne of God.

What has faith not done for the human race? It has lifted them from the groveling state of nature. It has made them free citizens of heaven. It has transformed and humanized the world. See the condition of the Gentile nations before they were enlightened by the

light of the Gospel. Were they not so many theatres of vice and crime where everyone fell down before his passions and worshipped them as gods? See the sad condition of the pagan world today in these great countries of the Orient which have sent so many of their children amongst us. And what would be our condition if we had lived in times and countries where the faith of Jesus Christ was unknown?

Let this thought, then, urge us to give unceasing thanks to God, "Who has transformed us from darkness into His admirable light." Let us prize our faith, the most precious of God's gifts, and the foundation of all others. Aye, let us prize it, for it can be lost, and it has been lost by peoples once the most illustrious in the Christian world; nay, do we not see it perishing daily in the hearts of thousands in our own city. Let us cherish it, then; and to this effect, let us take care that our's be not a dead or inert faith, a faith that molders in the slough of indifference. Let it be, rather, a living and active faith, a faith that will not have us come empty-handed before our God; but one that, like that of the Wise Men, will inspire us to bring gifts—the gold of holy charity, as a tribute to our new born King; the incense of sincere praise, as to the sovereign God; the myrrh of a penitential and mortified life, which will make us conformed to the suffering and crucified life of Jesus Christ. Thus, presenting before the throne of our God the fruits of a living and sincere faith, may we hope to be admitted one day to the vision of the Divine Essence, the supreme reward of all our labors and strivings and watchings here below.

THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL.

ST. PAUL.

FIRST SERMON: THE SECTARY AND THE APOSTLE.

NOTE.—The following sermon was preached on the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul (the patronal feast of the Paulist Fathers) in "Old St. Mary's Church," San Francisco, 25th of January, 1909:

I.

"And the Lord said to him (Ananias): 'go thy way: for this man is to Me a vessel of election to carry My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.'"—Acts ix., 15-16.

1. Introduction—Ordinarily the feast of a saint is celebrated on the anniversary of his death: but there are two feasts in the calendar remarkable in this, that they commemorate the conversion of the saints in whose memory they are celebrated; viz., of St. Augustine, and of St. Paul.

2. The present, a fitting occasion to consider briefly the life-story of this remarkable man. A Jew, the son of parents who lived in the strictest observance of the Law, he spent his childhood and early youth in Tarsus of Cilicia, where he devoted himself to the study of the Law of Israel. Afterwards he went up to Jerusalem to prosecute his studies, and placed himself under the tutelage of Gamaliel. Who this Gamaliel was, and what were his views as opposed to those of his great rival, Shammai, who taught about the same time. His great abilities and success as a student.

3. In spite of the precepts of his master counselling, mildness and toleration, he turns out to be the most intolerant of sectaries. His fierce, overmastering temper carries him to be the leader of the persecuting Jews. He takes part in the murder of St. Stephen; and after having filled the Christians of Jerusalem with the terror of his name, he obtains from the high priest, Annanas, letters to the chiefs of the synagogues of Damascus empowering him to bring back in chains to Jerusalem all the Christians whom he might find there.

1. The story of his journey to Damascus: his discomfiture, and conversion.

II.

1. His long and arduous preparation for the work of the Apostolate; his consecration, and recognition by the chiefs of the Apostles, and special call by the Holy Ghost. The reasons for

all this preparation; and the sublime teachings of St. Thomas on the dignity and holiness of the apostolic office.

2. The great Apostle "labored more than all the others" in the spreading of the Gospel; summary of his apostolic journeys; the new Alexander; his capture and death.

The Sectary.

1. Ordinarily when the Church institutes a feast in honor of a saint that feast is celebrated on the anniversary of the day when, having put aside the trappings of this mortal life of misery and tears he enters on the possession of a new and immortal life with God. But there are two feasts in the Church's calendar that are remarkable in this that they are instituted to commemorate the conversion of the saints in whose honor they are dedicated. The one of these is the feast of the conversion of St. Augustine, the great Bishop of Hyppo, in Africa; the other, the feast which we celebrate today, that is, of the conversion of St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, the circumstances surrounding which I have read for you from the Acts of the Apostles.

In the one, we are shown a man whose early life, blighted by heresy and sin, is changed, only to become the most contrite and edifying of penitents; and for all time one of the most brilliant lights in the firmament of the Church.

In the other, we behold the fierce persecutor of the faithful changed into the most intrepid champion of the Church's faith; a man who, to use the words of Jesus Christ, was to be made a chosen instrument of God to carry the knowledge of His name "before the Gentiles, and kings, and the people of Israel."

2. And now, dearly beloved, the present seems a fitting occasion to consider briefly the life-story of this

wonderful man whose work looms so largely across the face of the Church, and whom all generations unite in looking upon as the chief molder of her doctrine.

A Jew, of the tribe of Benjamin, the son of parents who lived in the strictest observance of the law of Moses, Paul, or Saul, as he was then called, spent his childhood and early youth in Tarsus, of Cilicia, a city which in those times shared with Athens and Alexandria the reputation of being one of the three most cultured cities of the world. But gifted as was our Saint with the rarest intellectual endowments, and many as were the worldly advantages to be derived from the acquirement of Greek learning, the mind of the boy turned instinctively from the study of the philosophy of Greece to the cultivation of a knowledge of the law of Israel.

As his parents had decided that he was to be a rabbi, that is to say, an interpreter of the Sacred Books, and a pleader before the courts of Israel, when now he was grown to boyhood, he was sent up to Jerusalem to study in one of the higher schools of Jewry. Whether guided by family counsels or consulting his own tastes, we know not, he betook himself to the school of Gamaliel to pursue his studies. This master, one of the seven whom the Jews honored with the title of Raban, stood at the head of a great school, noted for the high character of its teaching. This Gamaliel, the grandson of the great Hilel who taught about the time our Lord was born in Bethlehem, and, as some would have it, son, moreover, of that Simeon, the president of the Sanhedrin, who ministered when Mary and Joseph presented the Child Jesus in the Temple, exercised a great and noble influence on the young doctors of Jerusalem. His views, tolerant, the upholder of a liberal interpre-

tation of the law as opposed to the more rigid teaching of his rival, Shammai, his only thought was to reconcile all mankind to the law, and to extend the kingdom of Jehovah over the whole earth. Hence, we are not surprised to find him forbearing towards the Christians, or at seeing him extend the influence of his great name to protect the Apostles when his associates on the great council of the Sanhedrin contemplated putting them to death.

"Here, sitting in the dust, at the feet of the wise man," Saul, as he himself tells us, "drank eagerly of his word." And with such effect that, as he continues, "in Judaism he made greater progress than any of his companions of the same age."

3. But in spite of all the precepts of his master counselling mildness and toleration, he could not restrain the ardor of the fiery young scribe, who would brook no deviation from what he considered the strict observance of the law. It was this fierce, overmastering temper that made him, later on, throw himself heart and soul into the persecution raised by the Jews of Jerusalem against the early Christians. It was this that carried him to take a chief part in the trial and murder of St. Stephen, the protagonist of the Church's liberty, and the protomartyr of the Church. And now, having filled the Christians of Jerusalem with the terror of his name, he goes to the high priest, Annanas, the son of that Annas who crucified our Lord, and obtains from him letters to the chiefs of the Synagogues at Damascus empowering him to seek out and bring in chains to Jerusalem all the Christians whom he might find in that city.

4. He sets out with this object accompanied with a retinue of followers, "breathing," as the Scripture says,

"threats and slaughter against the faithful." With eagerness he passes over that strange, rock-strewn country of Iturea which separates Judea from Syria, and enters on the lovely valley of Damascus—a land set with orchards and gardens, and watered by the many-flowing streams of the Abana- a region so beautiful then as now, as to be compared, in the poetic language of the East, to a "handful of seed pearls on an emerald carpet."

Sitting on his charger, his mind occupied with the thought of the glory that awaited him, and of the grand reception he was to get from his co-religionists of Damascus, "when now the sun was midway in the heavens, a light from above beyond the brightness of the sun shined round about him," and he was felled to the ground by some unseen power. While thus stunned and fearing, he heard a voice saying to him in the Hebrew tongue, "Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute Me?" "Who art Thou, Lord?" he answered. And the Lord said: "I am Jesus of Nazareth Whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad." Thereupon, trembling and terrified, he cried out: "Lord, what wouldst Thou have me to do?" when he is given the instructions I have read for you as to his future conduct.

Thus ends the first part of the career of our Saint, where we see him, no longer the brilliant young student who so distinguished himself in the school of Gamaliel; no longer the fierce sectary breathing threats and slaughter against the followers of Christ; but the humbled, penitent neophyte, spending his days and nights in prayer and receiving instruction in Christian doctrine from one of the priests of God's Church, the holy old man, Annanias.

The Apostle.

1. Now we are not to understand, dearly beloved, that this persecutor of the Church struck down by Jesus Christ in the midst of his work of persecution, rises up to begin all at once his mission of Apostle. Oh, no; he must, first of all, retire into the desert, there to purify his soul by prayer and penance. He must commune for long years with God in solitude. He must, "as one born out of time," who had never seen the Saviour face to face, receive special instruction from Heaven, and the whole body of celestial doctrine must be unfolded to him, even as it was to the others. He must frequent the holy mount, in former times the refuge of Moses and Elias, there to be lifted up in vision, and to get a glimpse of things Divine which "it is not given to the tongue of man to utter." He must receive from the pastors of the Church "the laying on of hands" which was to raise him to the episcopal dignity. He must go up to Jerusalem to see the chiefs of the Apostles, and be recognized by them as an associate. And, finally, he must be chosen by the Holy Spirit for the work of the Apostolate.

Now it might be asked: why all these years of study and prayer; why all this preparation? Why all this loss of valuable time in one who is no longer young, when, to the eye of the outer man, the fields seemed already white for the harvest?

Well, dearly beloved, to judge aright of this we must consider beyond all the sublime mission of the Apostle. For the Apostle is one called to fulfill the highest dignity and office on earth, and with the dignity, to attain the sublimest holiness ever arrived at by mortal. St. Thomas speaking on this subject, says: that "it is

temerity to compare other saints to the Apostles, in grace or glory;" that "they were confirmed in grace" even as was the blessed Mother of God; that "their every movement and every action was according to the promptings of the Holy Ghost;" that "they were instructed immediately by the Divine Word, inasmuch as He spoke to them in a human manner," whence also "they possessed all knowledge that was expedient for the conversion of the world." Moreover, "their teaching is to form the deposit of the Church's doctrine," and, finally, "they are the spiritual fathers of the faithful of all climes and of all generations." Such the dignity and such the holiness to which our Saint is called. And thus prepared, and thus equipped he goes back again to his native city of Tarsus, there to await the summons of the Holy Spirit to take up the work of the Apostolate.

2. Time does not permit me to go into the detail of those apostolic labors that fill up the remaining years of his life. Let me only say that there is scarcely a nation bordering on the Mediterranean whether in Europe or in Western Asia, that did not hear the voice of his pleading. And though the remembrance of his past sins caused him to look upon himself as the least of the Apostles, and on account of such he considered himself as unworthy to have shared in the society and friendship of Jesus Christ; yet could he say with truth that he labored more than all the other Apostles in the spread of the Gospel.

And if, indeed, with the help of map and Testament, we follow him in his several apostolic journeys, from Antioch to Cyprus, and thence on through the countries of Pamphilia, and Piscidia, and Laoconia, and back again after five years to Antioch and Jerusalem; and

thence again on a second journey through the whole continent of Asia Minor, including Phrygia, Galacia, and the Ionian cities of the Troad, and thence on through Macedonia and Thessaly, to Athens and Corinth: and again on a third missionary journey through these same countries, taking in Lydia and Illyria, till his return by Ephesus and Miletus on a third visit to Jerusalem, where he is taken prisoner and kept four years in chains; and if, after his release in Rome we trace his wanderings in Spain, and Greece, and Italy, where he is captured and condemned to death; does he not appear another Alexander, to whom the world was too small to satisfy the cravings of his apostolic zeal?

ST. PAUL.

SECOND SERMON: THE MAN OF MANY PARTS; HIS MARTYRDOM.

I.

1. If we would gain a thorough knowledge of the saints and of their career we must study their gifts of mind and heart, and the motives that actuated them in the prosecution of their works. The gifts of St. Paul, varied and catholic in their extent, may be chiefly reduced to three: science, fortitude, and love.

2. And first, science—he was one of the geniuses of history, and he had great advantages for the perfecting of his capabilities. First, his early life was spent in the cultured city of Tarsus; second, in Jerusalem he studied under the greatest master of Jewry. There "he made greater progress than any of his companions of the same age." As a scribe his learning and genius gave him a position of eminence in the synagogues of Jerusalem. Later on his superiority over all his competitors in disputation brought on him frequent persecutions. God made use of those natural endowments for the carrying out of His will. So ample is the deposit of religious truth contained in the writings of the saint; so universal, etc., his doctrine that even if all the other scriptures were destroyed, not much that is essential would be wanting to the doctrine of the Church.

3. If science perfects the mind, it is fortitude that perfects the will. This is a gift of the Holy Ghost which so strengthens man as to enable him to face all trials and to sustain all labors and sufferings in the cause of God. The obstacles which confront us in the perfect fulfilment of God's will are of a two-fold nature—those that are within us, and those that we meet exteriorly. Our saint so overcame all obstacles of the former class that the fierce persecutor of God's people became so pliant to grace that he could say, "I live now; not I, but Christ liveth in me." As to the trials coming from without, the bare enumeration of them as they are given in his writings is enough to fill us with admiration of the man who could bear so much and overcome so much for the upholding of a principle. A summary of those trials and persecutions he gives us in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. xiv., 23, etc.

4. Those qualities of science and fortitude in our saint were eclipsed and sublimated by his love. This love had a twofold object—God and man. As to his love for God, we get a glimpse of its intensity now and again in his writings; as in his Epistle

to the Romans, where he says: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ," etc.

The love he bore his Divine Master filled him with grief at the thought of the persecutions he had waged long ago against the Christians of Jerusalem; while, on the other hand, it carried him to share as largely as poor human nature was capable in the suffering life of Jesus Christ.

II.

1. As to his love for his fellow man, it was the secret of all his trials, as it was of all his successes as an Apostle. The charity of the great Apostle was to the last one in which the human traits were visible side by side with the supernatural. Hence, we see his broad-souled sympathy extend itself to every phase of human joy and sorrow. Hence, those affectionate greetings he appends to all his letters to the many acquaintances he had met in the course of his apostolate.

The affection of the Apostle for all men was fully reciprocated by the Christians for whom he labored. This love for his dear neophytes, and his desire for their spiritual wellbeing moderated in him the desire that he had for the enjoyment of the Divine Presence. And even when he looked forward to the crown of justice that was in store for him, he associated the joys of heaven with the presence of his converts.

This love for God and men that burned in his heart overbore all obstacles and carried him from country to country in the propagation of the Gospel, till, at the end of the twenty-five years of his apostolate he saw a large part of the countries of Europe and Western Asia evangelized by his labors. In each he ordered a liturgy and laws, and organized a hierarchy to look after their future well-being. And to the existence of those communities we are indebted for his glorious Epistles.

It was becoming that he who had been the standard-bearer of the faith in so many lands should end his life by martyrdom. This took place in the first general persecution, that inaugurated by Nero. The circumstance which gave occasion for the persecution, and the atrocities committed in it related. The chiefs of the Apostles who were then absent from Rome hastened back to the city to comfort and encourage their followers. They were apprehended and martyred: the one by crucifixion, the other by the sword.

2. Conclusion. The ceremony that we take part in reminds us that St. Paul's name and labor have not been forgotten. And eighteen centuries later, when a young Order should arise in the Church, in a country unknown to the founders of Christianity,

the founders when choosing a patron and a model on whose ideals to order their lives could know of none among the Saints more fitting to outline the objects they had in view than the great Apostle. Thus it is that now in the beginning of the twentieth century we behold the members of this young Order devote themselves to the preaching of the faith of Jesus Christ: not only to the Catholic people, but also to those outside the fold of the Church; and with conspicuous success, as is shown from the numbers of their converts. This noble consecration of their lives, and this grand success of their labors, give hope that in time greater success will be achieved, and that multitudes of upright, unprejudiced non-Catholics will be brought into the Church.

That it may be so we sincerely pray; and that we may have the happiness of seeing this vigorous young order grow in strength and fruitfulness, is our most ardent hope and desire.

The Man of Many Parts.

1. And now, dearly beloved, in the consideration of the career of the Saints, if we would gain a thorough knowledge of their lives we must study the gifts of mind and heart they were possessed of, and the motives that actuated them in the prosecution of their works. What, then, were the gifts of our Saint, and what, the motives that influenced him in his phenomenal labors for the spread of the Gospel? Well, dearly beloved, those gifts, varied and catholic in their extent, may chiefly be reduced to three: viz., science, and fortitude, and love.

2. And, first of all, science—a man of more than ordinary intelligence, one of the geniuses of history, Paul had great advantages for the perfecting of his mental capabilities. We have seen him in early life go up to Jerusalem from the cultured city of Tarsus, there, under the tutorship of the greatest teacher of Jewry, to perfect himself in the study of the Law. And so great were his abilities, so assiduous was he in the prosecu-

tion of his studies during the years that he sat at Gamaliel's feet, that he tells us he "made greater progress than any of his companions of the same age." As a scribe, and even anterior to his conversion, his learning and his genius gave him a position of eminence in the synagogues of Jerusalem. And in after times it was his superiority over all his competitors in disputation in the synagogues that brought on him frequent persecution and perils of violence and death.

And hence it was that God Who is wont to make use of the natural endowments of a man for the carrying out of His will, employed the natural gifts of the Saint to formulate that great body of doctrine which was to be for all time the deposit of the Church's faith. "He shall be a vessel of election to carry My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the people of Israel." And, indeed, so ample is the deposit of religious truth contained in the writings of our Saint; so deeply did he drink in the fountain of supernatural knowledge; so profound, so scientific, and so universal the doctrine contained in those fourteen Epistles that he gave to the Church, that even if all the other Scriptures were destroyed, not much that is essential would be wanting to the Church's doctrines.

But if science perfects the mind, there is another quality that perfects the will, and that is fortitude. This is a gift of the Holy Spirit to man to enable him to face all trials, and to sustain all labors and sufferings in the cause of good. The man endowed with the supernatural gift of fortitude is by it strengthened so as to overcome all obstacles that prevent him from fulfilling the perfect will of God. Those obstacles are of a twofold nature, those that are within us, in our own

heart, and those that we meet exteriorly. As to our Saint, we see him so face and overcome all the obstacles of the former class, that he who was before his conversion the fierce persecutor of the people of God, the obstinate, self-willed Jewish sectary, who "kicked against the goad" of remorse that pricked his conscience, as he tried the most violent means to re-establish the worn-out forms of Jewish worship, become so pliant to grace, to identify his will with that of his crucified Master, that he could say with truth: "I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me."

And as to the trials coming from without, the bare enumeration of them as they are given in his writings is enough to fill us with admiration of the man who could bear so much, and overcome so much, for the upholding of a principle. Speaking of these trials, in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, he says: "I was in many more labors than they," i. e., the false teachers who opposed him, "in prisons more frequently, in stripes above measure, in deaths often. Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Thrice I suffered shipwreck. A night and a day I was in the midst of the sea. In journeyings, often; in perils of water; in perils of robbers; in perils from the Gentiles; in perils in the city; in perils in the wilderness; in perils in the sea; in perils from false brethren. In labor and painfulness; in much watching; in hunger and thirst; in fastings, often; in cold and nakedness; besides those things that are without, my daily insistence and solicitude for all the churches."

3. But if great was the fortitude of our Saint in bearing trials for the spread of the Gospel; if great, and

deep, and full was the science of divine things possessed by him, a science that he placed at the foot of the Cross; as when he says: "I know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified"; these qualities are eclipsed and sublimated by his love. This love of St. Paul had a twofold object, God and man. As to his love for God, we get a glimpse of its intensity now and again in his writings—as in his Epistle to the Romans, where he says: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation; or distress; or famine; or nakedness; or danger; or persecution; or the sword? But in all things we overcome because of Him that hath loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

This love that he bore for his Divine Master filled him with grief at the thought of the persecutions he waged long ago against the Christians of Jerusalem—a persecution with which he reproaches himself many times in his Epistles, and which made him look upon himself as unworthy of the high vocation of the Apostolate: "Lord, Thou knowest that I cast into prison and beat in every synagogue those that believed in Thee; and when the blood of Stephen, Thy witness, was shed, I stood by and consented, and kept the garments of them that stoned him"; while, on the other hand, it carried him to share as largely as poor human nature was capable in the suffering life of Jesus Christ. This we see in the many outbursts of love and desire with which his writings are filled. "God forbid that I should glory in anything save the cross of my Lord,

Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified to me, and I, to the world"; "From henceforth let no man be troublesome to me, for I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ on my body"—the marks he received in the many whippings and bruises suffered in the course of his Apostolate.

4. As to his love for his fellow men, it was the secret of all his trials, as it was of all his successes as an Apostle. No, no man ever loved as did the great Apostle; and no man was ever loved by his followers as he.

The charity of St. Paul was not of the kind seen in others of the saints, whose natural love for their fellow-beings seemed to be absorbed in the supernatural. The charity of the great Apostle was to the last a charity in which the human traits are visible side by side with the supernatural, even as the waters of two great rivers which, joining their stream in a mighty flood, seem to flow side by side throughout their course to the ocean. Hence we see his broad-souled sympathy extend itself to every phase of human joy and sorrow. "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalized, and I am not on fire? To the Jews, I became a Jew; that I might gain the Jews. To them that are under the law, as if I were under the law; that I might gain them that are under the law. To those that were without the law, as if I were without the law: that I might gain them that were without the law. To the weak, I became weak; that I might gain the weak. I became all things to all men; that I might save all."

Hence we see those affectionate greetings he appends to all his letters to the many acquaintances he had met in the course of his Apostolate. And that affection for

all men was fully reciprocated by the Christians for whom he labored. Hence we see them cling to him, make sacrifices for his sake, and shield him when possible from the attacks of his enemies.

And who is not moved at reading the account of that last affecting scene that took place at Ephesus where the faithful and the clergy, with tears and lamentations, "throw themselves on his neck and kiss him, being grieved most of all for the word that he now said, that they should see his face no more." Nay, this love for his dear neophytes and his desire for their spiritual well-being moderated in him the desire that he had for the enjoyment of the Divine presence; for he speaks of himself as "straightened between two things—having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, a thing far the better; but to abide in the flesh is needful for you." And even when he looks forward to the "crown of justice" that was in store for him, he associates the joys of Heaven with the presence of his converts. "What is our hope, our joy, our crown of glory? Are you not, in the presence of our Lord, Jesus Christ, at His coming? For you are our glory and our joy."

This sympathetic love for all men, this love of God that burned in his heart, this intrepid zeal that overbore all obstacles, it was that that bore him on from country to country, till, at the end of the twenty-five years of his Apostolate, he sees a large part of the countries of Europe and Western Asia, the very center of the civilization and commercial life of the world, evangelized by his labors. Syria, Pamphylia, Lydia, Galatia, Ionia, Macedonia, Thessaly, Illyria, Greece, Cyprus, Italy, and Spain—he traveled through them all, most of them

several times. In each and all he won to the knowledge of the religion of Christ large communities of men and women. In each and all he ordered a liturgy and laws, and organized a hierarchy to look after their future well-being. And to the existence of those communities we are indebted for those glorious Epistles which, as a legacy, he left to the Church to be for all time the chief repository of her doctrine.

His Martyrdom.

1. And now, after twenty-five years of labor in the Apostolate, five of which he passed in chains, the great Apostle comes to die. It was becoming that he who had labored so strenuously in the cause of the Faith, who had been its standard bearer in so many lands, who had edified the whole Church by the splendor of his virtues, and had enlightened her by his teaching, should end his life by martyrdom. It was in the time of the first general persecution—that of the Emperor Nero. This monster who now ruled at Rome, having brought suspicion on himself of being the instigator of the burning of the city, tried to turn the odium of the deed from himself against the Christians. With this object he, first of all, had rumors spread among the people that they, as enemies of the gods, had tried to enwrap the whole empire in conflagration, and then gave orders that they were everywhere to be set upon and butchered. He encouraged the atrocities that were being practised on them by himself having them seized and put to death. Numbers were slaughtered by the sword or thrown to the wild beasts in the amphitheaters. Others, he had clothed in sheepskins, to be worried by dogs and wolves. Others again, he had enveloped in tar

and pitch, and set up as torches to light up the imperial gardens, while he himself, dressed as a charioteer, drove round to be a witness of their sufferings.

The chiefs of the Apostles, who were then absent, hastened back to Rome to comfort and encourage their followers. Their presence in the city could not long be concealed. They were apprehended, condemned, and executed; the one, by crucifixion, on the ground where stands today the palace of the Vatican; and he was buried in the spot over which, in after times, was raised the noblest temple that was ever erected to the honor of the true God; the other, enjoying the privilege of Roman citizenship inherited from his ancestors, could not be punished as a slave. He was taken without the walls, and there he suffered death by being beheaded.

2. One word more, and I have done. The ceremony that we take part in here today reminds us that St. Paul's name and labors have not been forgotten. And when eighteen centuries later a young Order should arise in the Church, amid manners very different to those that obtained in his time, and in a land far away beyond the Western ocean -a country unknown to and unthought of by the peoples among whom the great Apostle labored; the founders of that Order, when choosing a patron and a model on whose ideals to order their lives, could know no one among the saints more fitting to outline the objects they had in view than the great Apostle whose life we have been considering.

They, too, laid themselves out to be Apostles. And, as long ago the Saviour of the world chose out the stricken Saul "to be a vessel of election to carry His name before the Gentles, and kings, and the people of Israel"; so, now, in the beginning of this twentieth cen

tury, we behold in our own land a body of apostolic men, holy, learned, filled with zeal, devote themselves to the preaching of the Faith of Jesus Christ, not only to the Catholic people of this great country, the true Israel of God, but also to those outside the pale of the Church, to those dear ones in Christ who seemed hitherto to be left unthought of. And with what success we know when the head of the Missions could carry to the Supreme Pastor the consoling intelligence that within the past year he and his fellow-missioners could lay claim to have converted twenty-five thousand non-Catholics to the Faith.

This noble consecration of their lives, and this grand success of their labors give hope that in time greater successes will be achieved, and that multitudes of upright, unprejudiced non-Catholics in this great country will be brought into the bosom of Holy Mother: the Church.

That it may be so, and that God may pour out abundant blessings on the members of the Order, we sincerely pray. And as in the case of their great patron, no sea however boisterous, no mountain barrier however high, no opposition however fierce, could stay his onward march as he bore the tidings of salvation from country to country; so, may we have the happiness of seeing this vigorous young Order grow in strength and power till it spread the influence of its noble life from ocean to ocean; and while nourishing the faithful with the food of sound doctrine, may it lead those who are without, our dear separated brethren, to the portals of the Church, their mother, that Church in which alone is found true life, and knowledge, and salvation.

THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

FIRST SERMON: JESUS OUR MODEL IN GENEROSITY AND SACRIFICE.

"And after the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they carried Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord."—Luke ii., 22-39.

1. Introduction—When the old men who returned to Jerusalem after the captivity of Babylon saw the meanness of the architecture of the second temple, they were filled with grief. God to encourage them sent His prophets to give them the assurance that its glory should far exceed that of the former temple; since the Lord of the temple should honor it with His presence. In this Gospel we see the fulfilment of these prophecies. But, oh, how different the fulfilment to that looked forward to by the Jews!

2. What is the meaning then of the Presentation? It is the formal dedication of Himself by Jesus Christ while yet a Child to the great work for which He was born; namely, to the sacrifice of His life upon the Cross for our Redemption. The oblation of the Divine Infant by the hands of the official head of the priesthood included in it the submission of His will to all the sufferings and outrages, and death, for the Redemption of the human race. What love and gratitude ought not the consideration of this great act of dedication excite in our hearts today?

3. But Jesus is not only our oblation to the Father in atonement for our sins; He is moreover our model in the oblation we ought to make of ourselves to the service and love of God. He, as the first-born of the human family, in fulfilment of the law offered Himself as a hostage to the Eternal Father in testimony of our fealty. His oblation compels ours also.

4. Nay, His oblation sanctifies ours, and it is only in consequence of, and in union with, this great act of oblation that our acts and our lives can be agreeable to God. When thus we make the offering of our lives to God in union with that of Jesus Christ, we enter on a participation in the infinite acceptability which every act of the Saviour has with the Eternal Father.

SECOND SERMON: MARY OUR MODEL IN HEROIC SELF-IMMOLATION.

1. But Jesus is not the only model given us in this mystery of the dedication we should make of ourselves to God. In Mary there is given us an example of generosity and sacrifice the like

of which the world had never seen before. Comment on the words of the prophecy of Simeon, "And thy own soul the sword shall pierce". By the Presentation Mary devoted her only Child to death for our Redemption. To understand the greatness of this sacrifice, we must take into account, first, the love of our Blessed Lady for her Jesus, and second, the consequences of her offering, to herself, and to the Divine Child.

2. Moreover, by that offering, Mary sacrificed her own heart. She who was the "Queen of Prophets" saw that from that moment "the sword of sorrow" should enter her soul and remain there all the rest of her days; and from that moment it might be said of her that "beneath the cross stood Mary the Mother of Jesus". Yet, with all that knowledge before her she that day entered the temple with her Babe in her arms, as if to sign His death warrant with her own hands. Surely, parodying the words of Scripture, we can cry out with St. Bonaventure: "Mary so loved the world that she gave for its Redemption her only Son"

3. The meditation of this mystery should call up in our hearts, not only feelings of gratitude and admiration, but, also and chiefly, love for, and confidence in, the blessed Mother of God. If with full knowledge of the consequences of her act she shrank not from the sacrifice of her Son for our salvation, can we doubt that she will shrink from any sacrifice on behalf of those who put their trust in her?

4. Other fruits that the consideration of Mary's sacrifice should produce in us are, that we learn to sacrifice ourselves and abstain from the many hurtful things, that prevent the perfect union of our souls with God; and that knowing ourselves to be guilty before God we should accept with resignation, if not with joy, the many grievances we have to put up with in this world.

Jesus Our Model in Generosity and Sacrifice.

1. When Zerobabel, the prince of Juda, and Jesus, the son of the high priest, Jozedeck, were raising the walls of the second temple, the old men who returned after their seventy years' captivity in Babylon were filled with grief at the sight of its mean architecture and of the lost prerogatives of the temple of Solomon; and "it seemed as nothing in their eyes in comparison to the glory of the former temple." And God sent his prophets, Aggaeus

and Malachy to encourage them with the assurance that the glory of the latter should far exceed that of the former; since the Lord of the temple Himself should honor it with His presence.

And in this Gospel we see the fulfilment of these prophecies. But, oh! how different the fulfilment to that looked forward to by the Jews. They looked forward to the coming of a great temporal ruler, who should appear in all the glory of Solomon; and behold, instead, an Infant in the arms of a young Mother, beside whom walks a young man carrying two pigeons, the offering of the poor.

2. Truly "God's ways are not our ways, nor are His thoughts ours!" Here indeed is a mystery that needs unfolding. What is the meaning, then, of the Presentation? Well, the whole spirit of this mystery, dearly beloved, is of consecration and sacrifice. It has been remarked of the Visitation that the mystery itself and the graces that accompany it were the immediate sequence of the Incarnation and the first fruits of sanctification effected through the means of the corporal presence of the Saviour in the world. And I can make a somewhat analogous statement with respect to the Presentation, and say that it is the outcome of the Nativity, and the formal dedication of Himself by Jesus Christ whilst still a Child to the great work for which He was born; namely, to the sacrifice of His life upon the Cross for our Redemption.

O brethren, consider the importance and the far-reaching effect of that great act of the Infant Saviour. The oblation of the Divine Infant by the hands of the high priest included in it the submission of His will to all the sufferings, all the persecutions, all the priva-

tions and torments that He was afterwards to undergo, even to the shedding of His Blood and the laying down of His life in the cause of the whole human race. What love and gratitude ought not the consideration of this great act of dedication excite in our hearts—in us who are the recipients of the graces of the Redemption?

3. But we rest not in the sentiments of love and gratitude alone. Jesus Christ in the Presentation is our Model in the sacrifice we ought to make of ourselves to God by the consecration to Him of a life wholly devoted to His service. The Presentation of the Child, Jesus, I say, represents the oblation of all Christians to the service and love of God.

In the old law God commanded that the first-born of every family should be offered to Him as a hostage of the fealty of the junior members. Jesus Christ, the First-born of the Eternal Father, having adopted us into the family of the Godhead, comes to offer Himself as a hostage for our sakes. It was thus for us, and, as it were, in our name that the Divine Infant came to offer to His Father the homage of our submission. The Presentation of the Divine Infant, therefore, compels the oblation of our lives to God; and wo to us, ungrateful disciples, if we are afterwards found wanting in the carrying out of that dedication; if we allow our good Master to go alone on the road to Calvary without daring to follow in His footsteps.

Nay, the Presentation in the temple sanctifies that oblation of our works also; and it is only in consequence of and in union with that great act of oblation that we, our good works, our hearts, our lives, though a thousand times immolated, can be agreeable to the Almighty. When thus we make the offering of

our lives to God in union with, and, as the Church's prayers put it in our mouth, "through our Lord Jesus Christ," we enter on a participation in the infinite acceptability which every act of the Saviour has with the Eternal Father. Let us unite, therefore, to the oblation of the Divine Infant the sacrifice of our lives to God; and when we pray, oh, let us offer our prayers to God in union with, and through our Lord Jesus Christ, His only Son, who liveth and reigneth world without end. Amen.

SECOND SERMON.

Mary Our Model in Heroic Self-Immolation.

1. But Jesus is not the only model that is given us in this mystery of the dedication we should make of ourselves to God. In Mary, His blessed Mother, there is given us an example of generosity and sacrifice the like of which the world had never seen before. When the old man, Simeon, took the Divine Child in his arms he blessed His parents, and said to Mary, His Mother: "behold, this Child is set up for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be contradicted; and thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed."

Consider, dearly beloved, the full import of that prophecy of the aged Simeon. "Behold," he says, "this Child is set up for the fall." Yes, not only "for the salvation," but also for "the damnation of many in Israel." He shall be as a butt to be pelted at by the wicked; that the sentiments of many, whether they be of love or loyalty to the Saviour; or, on the contrary, of hatred and hostility to Him, may be manifested. "And thy own soul a sword shall pierce." By the offering of her Child in the temple, therefore, Mary

devoted that Child, her only One, to death for the Redemption of mankind.

To understand the greatness of this sacrifice we must take into account two things—the love of our Blessed Lady for her Jesus; and the consequence such an offering involved both for her and for her Divine Son. As to Mary's love for Jesus, it was inconceivable. In Him there was wrapped up the double love of a Mother for her only Child, and of the holiest of creatures for her God. And this Child, for our sakes, "she sets up for a sign to be contradicted." He will be made the butt for all the malice of hell and for the persecutions of the wicked. This Child, I say, she devotes to a life of suffering, and persecution, and scorn—to scourgings, and thorns, and opprobrium, and dereliction, and to a shameful death on the cross.

2. Moreover, Mary by that offering sacrificed her own heart. She, who was herself the Queen of Prophets, saw that from that moment "the sword of sorrow" should enter her soul and remain there during the rest of her days. She saw clearly the agony she would have to sustain at the Crucifixion; and from that moment to the day of Calvary it might be said of her what was afterwards narrated in the history of the Passion: "beneath the Cross stood Mary, His Mother." Who, then, shall describe the anguish of this generous soul when the solemn moment approached in which she enters the temple with her Divine Babe in her arms, as if to sign His death warrant with her own hands? Oh, let us with gratitude recall this generosity of Mary; and, parodying the words of Scripture, cry out with St. Bonaventure: "Mary so loved the world as to give for its Redemption her only Son."

3. But gratitude and admiration are not the only feelings this unparalleled sacrifice of Mary should call up in our hearts. The chief fruits the meditation on this holy mystery should produce in us are a tender love for, and an unshakable confidence in the Mother of God. What love for us has not the holy Virgin shown in the Presentation? And if she shrank not from the consequences of her act, though they were clearly revealed to her at that moment; can we fear that she will stop at any sacrifice in our behalf when she sees us put our trust in her in the midst of the dangers that beset us?

4. There are other fruits still that the consideration of Mary's sacrifice should produce in us, and they are that we learn from her generously to sacrifice ourselves, and to abstain from those many hurtful things that prevent the perfect union of our souls with God. If Mary parts with her only Son—dissolves a union the most holy that ever was, when it is decreed by the Eternal Father, and for love of us; what ought to become of the many attachments and criminal friendships that keep us at a distance from our God? And if she, the holiest of creatures, the most favored of women, is made through life the most afflicted of mothers; what ought to be the life of those who are guilty before God, and who from their birth are condemned to tears?

Oh, let us, then, in imitation of Mary's generous example, separate ourselves from all those things that God wills us to give up for His sake. Let us, above all, keep away from sin and its occasions. Thus shall we make our lives acceptable to God, and merit hereafter the possession of Eternal Life.

LAUS DEO SEMPER.

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